University of Alberta

A Photo-Assisted Exploration of Sense of Place in Hinton and Jasper, Alberta

by

©

Marke Ambard

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Abstract

This study uses a qualitative photo-assisted methodology for exploring the sense of place of respondents in two rural communities in Alberta with the intention of contributing to the study of community sustainability and general sense of place theory. A total of 45 respondents in Hinton and Jasper were asked to photograph 12 images each that represented those elements of place that they were most attached to. The photo-assisted methodology was used to improve the quality of the semi-structured interviews, which are the data from which results were drawn. Respondents indicated high levels of attachment and satisfaction with their place, and it appears social, experiential and physical components all conspire to create their sense of place. A balance of these factors was important, and while respondents from each community listed the same place attachments, the meanings were often very different between those in Jasper and those in Hinton.

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

> This is the most beautiful place on earth. There are many such places. Every man, every woman, carries in heart and mind the image of the ideal place, the right place, the one true home, known or unknown, actual or visionary.
>
> --Edward Abbey, "Desert Solitaire"

Sense of place refers to the bond between humans and place. Included in this conception are all the meanings, beliefs and values of those who experience the physical location. Sense of place is a theoretical framework for exploring levels of place attachment and satisfaction, and it is a measure that is sensitive to those hard to define emotional and spiritual connections that can arise between land and person. As the world globalizes, however, places are changing in how they are composed, perceived and accessed. Communications technology and increased mobility have caused many to reevaluate place. Some theorists contend that in a global world specific places become irrelevant, while others contend just the opposite.

This research has approached issues of place in two rural communities in Alberta, Canada: Hinton and Jasper. In order to investigate the multiple levels of meaning that constitute place, a photo-assisted qualitative methodology was utilized to encourage residents of these two communities to explore and represent their sense of place. A total of 45 respondents photographed over 580 images to communicate those elements that most attached them to their place, those things that they would most miss if they were to leave, and those things that meant the most to them. The interview data indicate that respondents have high levels of attachment and satisfaction with their place, and it appears social, experiential and physical components all conspire to create their sense of place. A balance of these factors was important, and while respondents from each community listed the same place attachments, the meanings were often very different between those in Jasper and those in Hinton.

Study Sites

Hinton and Jasper are located in west-central Alberta. Hinton is approximately 270 km west of Edmonton, and is a resource dependent town with a population of nearly 10 000 residents. Hinton's economy is driven primarily by forestry and mining, and although it is conveniently located only 15 minutes east of the Jasper National Park boundary, it has not become the type of tourist destination, or weekend getaway, as has similarly situated communities, such as Canmore, bordering Banff National Park to the south. This is largely due to Hinton's pride in its history as a resource town, and the general feeling that tourism does not fit within this image, or provide the same caliber of employment that industry does, for its residents.

The town of Jasper is located in the heart of Jasper National Park, and has a population of approximately 4800 people. Although Jasper is now primarily dependent on tourism generated by the national park, it was founded by the railroad, and throughout its history it has been as much a blue-collar working town as a tourist town. This balance is changing as the railroaders' presence in town has decreased due to advances in technology, downsizing, and a changing transportation industry, leaving tourism as the primary industry. During the summer of 2001, when the data for this project were collected, Jasper had just won the right to form their own municipal government, which had historically been under the mandate of Parks Canada.

Purpose of the Study

Resource dependent communities and issues of community sustainability have long been of interest to social scientists. A desire to approach sustainability issues through an explicitly 'place-based' theoretical framework was integral to the conception of this project. Sense of place provides a means for assessing a wide range of place-specific issues, such as *how attached* and *how satisfied* residents are with place, and whether or not their conceptions and values of place are sustainable. Sense of place acknowledges the dynamic nature of place, and its susceptibility to 'outside' influence, history, social and economic structures, and mobility. I have chosen sense of place as a means to understanding how respondents in these two communities *feel* about their place, because I believe that it provides a richer, more complete picture of what it means to 'be at home'. Residents who are committed to place, and who hold sustainable beliefs and values in relation to that place, are the best indicator, in my opinion, of a sustainable community.

This thesis is an exploration of the sense of place of two rural communities in Alberta. The purpose of this project is to identify those elements of place that respondents indicate as most important to their attachment and satisfaction, and to gain an understanding of the values, beliefs, and meanings integral to their sense of place. Two communities that differ in land management type, topography, and community composition, but that are closely situated to one another, were used to explore how sense of place may vary in response to different socio-demographic and physical landscape characteristics.

Research Objectives

This research has been conducted with the intent of contributing to both community sustainability research, and the theoretical study of place. This thesis has three main objectives:

- To explore sense of place in a manner that acknowledges the inseparability of the social and physical components of place, and therefore allows and encourages each to manifest itself through the research design and instrument.
- To approach sense of place with an innovative methodology that can allow the richness and diversity of meanings, beliefs and values of place to be successfully communicated.
- To test this photo-assisted methodology for its effectiveness as a useful management tool for forest policy makers, town managers, and community researchers.

Significance of the Study

This research uses an innovative photo-assisted methodology to explore the sense of place of respondents from two rural communities in Alberta. Both visual methodology and sense of place are receiving increased attention in the social sciences, and the potential for meaningful contribution from both of these areas is substantial, yet still maturing. In the realm of visual methodologies, this project is somewhat unique in that it hands over cameras to participants with the intention of investigating their conceptions and perceptions of place. This is unlike the majority of image-based research that consists primarily of 1) a researcher producing images, and potentially eliciting participant response to these images; or 2) a researcher utilizing images, which she has not produced, for historical or content analysis, and/or eliciting participant responses to these images (Ball and Smith, 1992; Prosser, 1998; Rose, 2001). Visual methodologies have sometimes been challenged under the premise that it is impossible to escape the bias, knowledge or lack of knowledge of the image producer (Rose, 2001); however, this is precisely the knowledge and bias that is being pursued in this project. The strength of this visual methodology lies in its ability to facilitate validity by increasing the level of understanding between respondents and me during semi-structured interviews. Sense of place is an oftentimes difficult concept to grasp, but recruiting participants to photograph those things that mean the most to them is a relatively easy matter to communicate.

Sense of place has a relatively long history of study, with some authors contesting that place issues have been at the core of sociological investigation from its very conception (Lobao, 1996); however, I contend that there exists room for further development. There has long been a split in the amount of importance placed on issues of social and physical components of place, with the result that the social components of place have received the bulk of academic attention (Freudenburg et al., 1995; Stedman, 2003). My goal has been to approach sense of place with a methodology sensitive to all components of place—the social, experiential and physical components—in order to contribute to the growing awareness and understanding of place issues.

Research Design

This project is situated within a larger project that is being conducted across Canada, made of six study sites in three provinces. There are two study sites in each of Newfoundland, Manitoba, and Alberta. These sites are Deer Lake and Rocky Harbour, in Newfoundland; Swan River and Ethelbert, in Manitoba; and, Hinton and Jasper, in

Alberta. The larger project consists of both a qualitative and a quantitative component. This master's thesis deals with the qualitative component from Hinton and Jasper only.

This study uses a qualitative visual methodology for exploring the sense of place of respondents in two rural communities in Alberta, with the intention of contributing to the study of community sustainability and general sense of place theory. A total of 45 respondents in Hinton and Jasper were asked to photograph 12 images each that represented those elements of place that they were most attached to, that they would most miss if they were to leave, and that held the most meaning for them. The visual methodology was used to inform and improve communication during the individual semi-structured interviews that were conducted with each participant. The photographs, then, have been used as a means for inspiring thought, improving response, and clarifying communication between respondents and me. I have not analyzed the visual data for this thesis, but have acknowledged their importance in contributing to the quality of the interview data, which are the data that results are drawn from.

The Author's Place

In order to understand how this topic and research was approached it is important to understand my motives and biases in approaching sense of place. My undergraduate degree is in the biological sciences, and it was in this field that I worked for seven years. Increasingly frustrated with purely quantitative approaches of investigation, I looked for something that would allow me to explore issues without the overriding need to be able to justify insights statistically. Working as a biological technician across Canada and the United States, I learned at least two things: 1) certain places held my heart and imagination more strongly than others; and, 2) I, and all the biologists I had worked with, had an underlying desire to 'save the (biological) world'.

The first realization intrigued me on a personal level, and I wished to understand place, and why certain places caused me to feel at home, alive, and content, while others did not. Second, the realization that the values we held as biologists were an important part of what we did, and why, inspired me to investigate environmental values explicitly. I wanted to bring the beliefs and values of environmental stewardship into the foreground instead of taking them for granted and disguising them behind scientific rhetoric. While studying butterflies in Arizona, I came across a book called *Cultures of Habitat*, written by Gary Paul Nabhan (1997), and it seemed to unite these two longings: to 'see' the world through a different lens, and to acknowledge the power of place.

Aware now that it was a social sciences discipline that I was searching for, I eventually ended up with the offer to study sense of place. Sense of place was, and still is, the ideal field of study for me. However, my biological background sneaks into this research in my desire to allow for the physical components of place in the findings. While I certainly do not wish to argue for environmental determinism, I do assert that humans come from nature and as such we are still subject to it. This research has been an attempt to approach place through two different ways of viewing the world: one that acknowledges the embeddedness of humans in nature, and one that acknowledges the embeddedness of humans in social structures. I have strived to view place through a lens that allows for the many facets of place, sensitive to the 'land' in landscape, but also aware that "what we call landscape is a stretch of earth overlaid with memory, expectation, and thought" (Sanders, 1997, p. 122).

Chapter Two

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several theorists in the social sciences question the importance of studying particular places, given the increasingly mobile and global aspect of the 'information society' (Eisenhauer et al., 2000; Meyrowitz, 1985; Giddens, 1991; Hay, 1998). The common argument refers to the alleged weakening of 'local bonds' due to the ability of residents to look outside of their physical community to meet their needs. Gone are the days—if ever they existed—where residents lived in harmonious, place-bound dependence (and interdependence) on one another. Instead, due to advancement in communication and transportation technologies, residents of even the most rural places are free to shop, learn, socialize and interact in places far removed from their actual home.

While some theorists take this globalization and the availability of these technologies as signs of the lessening importance of localized place attachment and commitment, others still maintain that place-based research and theorizing is valuable (Gustafson, 2001; Eisenhauer et al., 2000; Cuthbertson, 1999; Hay, 1998). In fact, to some, globalization leads to localization (Gustafson, 2001; Beck, 2000). Some contend, "increased mobility in modern society may actually increase the importance of geographic elements of community, as residential locales are more freely chosen than they were in the past" (Eisenhauer, 2000, p. 426). Others stress the importance of social stratification when speaking of mobility, technology and freedom of choice, since these are still very much the luxury of wealthier and more powerful citizens. To these theorists, poorer residents continue to retain a strong local attachment out of necessity and lack of opportunity for anything else (Fried, 2000; Duncan and Duncan, 2001).

The diversity of opinion on the relevance of place-based analyses certainly should not discourage further investigation into the meanings and importance of place, but rather should inspire more. It is certain that technology and globalization are changing how place is perceived, created, re-created and enacted, but this should be seen as an opportunity for further study, rather than as reason for abandoning place-based research. Place exists, and it always will. Social scientists have yet to show that regionalism or local attachment will ever be replaced by global concern. In fact, despite the prevalence of global concern, knowledge and attention that is common today, there still appears to be no less passion and commitment displayed in regards to the particular regions that make up this global culture. Entrikin (1991) quotes an early twentieth century historian, speaking about the rootedness of universalism:

> But they are never universal, for they always bring with them a clump of native soil from the national sphere, a sphere that no individual can completely leave behind (Meinecke, cited in Entrikin, 1991, p. 2).

And, once in the national sphere, it could as easily be argued that no one is truly national, without bringing with them a clump of their native soil from their home region. Place is many things, and can be approached on many levels, but it can never be escaped. Despite political and personal intentions to live at a higher abstraction of place—to be a global citizen—it is very likely that none of us will ever be able to completely let go of that particularity that comes from living in a place—something that all of us must do.

Place

Place is most commonly defined as an experienced physical location, laden with meaning and values. Relph (1976) influenced much of what has followed by defining place by its components: physical setting, activities, and meanings. Brandenburg and Carroll (1995) elaborate this definition somewhat as physical setting, human activities, and psychological and social processes. Place is merely space until it is experienced and understood, or processed, by humans (Tuan, 1977). Williams and Patterson (1994) take their definitions of place from Agnew (1989), stating that it is most often used in three ways: (1) to denote a location, as in the spatial distribution of social and economic activities; (2) to represent a locale: the settings in which social relations are constituted; and, (3) as a sense of place, or the identification with place emotionally or symbolically. For Tuan (1975),

> …places are points in a spatial system [and] at the opposite extreme, they are strong visceral feelings. Places are seldom known at either extreme: the one is too remote from sensory experience to be real, and the other presupposes rootedness in a locality and a commitment to it that are increasingly rare (p. 152).

Massey (1994, 1995) challenges the common conceptions of place, arguing that they ignore the influence of the outside on the inside, and the role of time. For Massey, the artificial boundaries that are drawn around places thereby exclude consideration into how the outside affects conceptions of those on the inside. Because there always is an outside, and the awareness of this alone will affect how those on the inside will conceive of and perceive themselves, the outside, and the influence it exerts, needs to be incorporated into definitions of place. Further, Massey contends that place is not a static, single entity, but rather is dynamic, and changes through time. Place is more of a process than an object, and as such the unfolding of place is a part of a production and reproduction of place (which includes the outside world) through time. Although used in a variety of contexts, time certainly plays a role in many definitions of what place is, and this will be further explored in the following sections.

Sense of Place

Sense of place is a phrase that receives a lot of use, and much of it is loosely defined, at best. Because it has managed to find its way into common parlance this confusion can be even greater. For the purposes of this project, 'sense of place' will refer to the collection of meanings, symbols, values and feelings that contribute to the emotional and functional relationships that people (or groups of people) have with their place (Williams and Stewart, 1998), and the desire they have to remain there, as well as the success of that place in meeting their needs—be they spiritual, emotional, material, or otherwise. In other words, for this project sense of place will be explored through the pursuit of meanings that people (or groups of people) associate with their place, as well as the amount of place attachment and place satisfaction that accrues from those meanings (Stedman, 2003).

While certain theorists seem to use the terms *sense of place, place* and *place attachment* as interchangeable, others feel that these terms differ considerably (Stedman, 2003; Williams and Stewart, 1998). According to Stedman (2003), place attachment is a core concept embedded within the sense of place construct. Stedman, drawing from the considerable literature on the subject, defines place attachment as a positive emotional bond between people and their place. Sense of place is certainly a larger concept than this. It could easily be the case that an individual has a strong sense of a place, but is not attached to it, or that the sense of place she holds is a negative sense of place and therefore the attachment may be very weak. An example of this could be the sense of place that many middle class citizens associate with the poorer parts of urban centres that they must visit regularly for work or commuting purposes.

Place satisfaction refers to an evaluation of the quality of a place or an environment. One could be satisfied with the quality of a place but remain unattached

(Stedman, 2003). As well, it is equally likely that an individual could feel dissatisfaction with a place yet remain strongly attached (Beckley, 2002). This could be a case of that individual's level of attachment reacting slower than her levels of place satisfaction, in which case there is some indication that she may alter her meanings of that place before she would alter her attachment to that place (Stedman, 2003). Or, it could be a case of 'negative place attachment' (Beckley, 2002). Negative place attachment is not a topic that is often pursued in the place attachment (or even place) literature. Beckley (2002) contends that depending on circumstances, place attachment can be a case of either magnets or anchors. The magnets refer to socio-cultural or ecological attributes that positively attach someone to place, while anchors are those (usually social) phenomena that keep someone in place although remaining in that place is not ideal.

> Anchors are factors that keep people in place, even though their remaining in that place may keep them in poverty, or may keep them unemployed, or in abusive, destructive relationships. Anchors are more related to social structural factors, such as economic conditions, class positions, power structure, family dynamics, and the like. Anchors may be more critical than magnets for understanding why people remain in the Mississippi Delta, or in Newfoundland outports, or on poverty-stricken Indian reserves and reservations in both Canada and the United States (Beckley, 2002, p. xx).

Place attachment and place satisfaction are distinct concepts, referring to phenomena that may be contradictory (Stedman, 2003). Further, they are less encompassing than sense of place, but they certainly contribute to one's sense of place. Therefore, sense of place in this work will include, but not be limited to, consideration into levels of place attachment and satisfaction.

Several important features of sense of place will be addressed in this study. First, sense of place can be an emotional connection and relationship to a place that may have taken years or very little time to develop (Tuan, 1975). Second, it consists of values about what is important in that place, and it contains meanings about what that place is and about what sort of people live there. These meanings and values can be obvious or unconscious, to either the insider or the outsider, or to both. Symbols or components of place that are integral to defining that place may in fact remain below conscious awareness until they are threatened or removed. Third, sense of place is a process that is created and recreated through social and individual experience and construction. As this project will show, sense of place changes through time and interaction, from within and from influences that come from without. More simply, sense of place "refers to the rich and varied meanings of places and emphasizes people's tendency to form strong emotional bonds with places" (Williams and Stewart, 1998, p. 19).

There may seem to be a great deal of overlap between the definitions of place and sense of place, but the terms refer to distinctive perspectives of the same relation. The former focuses on the characteristics of a physical location that theorists have come to acknowledge is rife with meaning, values and experience, while the latter accords more attention to the meanings, values and emotions themselves that people have in relation to a physical location.

Researchers in place-related fields have tended to focus attention on one, or sometimes two, components of place, depending on their particular approach. This section will overview place literature by categorizing research into these components of place on which these researchers have placed most emphasis, including (1) place and experience, (2) place and meaning, and/or (3) place as a physical location. While these artificial distinctions often blur, they are useful as points of entry into the literature on place and place theory.

Place is Experienced

Place takes on meaning through experience (Relph 1976; Hay 1998). Relph (1976) distinguishes between the types of experience that an insider or an outsider has in relation to a place. For Relph (1976), one's experience will be authentic or inauthentic depending on one's relation to place. An insider, who has daily interactions with a place, identifies with that place more authentically than someone whose experience is from afar, or only periodic or superficial. Similarly, in his work in New Zealand and the Cowichan Valley of British Columbia, Hay (1998a; 1998b) contrasts between the sense of place of those who reside in an area and those who merely visit or have an understanding of it from afar. For Hay, "contact with a place is necessary to maintain a sense of place, just as such contact is necessary to maintain other relationships" (1998a, p. 6). Tuan (1975) also supported this idea of time spent experiencing a place in order to lead to a richer connection with that place:

> Experience takes time. Sense of place is rarely acquired in passing. To know a place well requires long residence and deep involvement. It is possible to appreciate the visual qualities of a place with one short visit, but not how it smells on a frosty morning, how city sounds reverberate across narrow streets to expire over the broad square, or how the pavement burns through gymnasium shoe soles and melt bicycles tires in August (p. 164).

For both Relph (1976) and Hay (1998a; 1998b) those individuals who experience a place without this insider experience have an "inauthentic…stereotyped, (and) artificial" understanding of that place (Fishwick and Vining, 1992, p. 58). Ryden (1993) supports this perspective: "Extended residence in a place tends to make us feel toward it almost as a living thing….[T]he place has become a shaping partner in our lives, we partially define ourselves in its terms, and it carries the emotional charge of a family member or any other influential human agent" (p. 66).

Clare Cooper Marcus' (1978) research further strengthens this idea of an experienced-based relationship to place. In her study, she asked a random sample of students to recollect their childhood landscapes. While Cooper Marcus' perspective is that of an environmental designer, her findings support and contribute to place theory. The two major themes that emerged out of her survey were that experiences in outdoor environments (such as climbing, digging, and the recollection of smells) as well as hiding places were the strongest memories of her participants.

> The number of times that camp or backpacking experiences, visits to working farms and relatives' ranches were mentioned in these papers indicates that the impact of these experiences goes far beyond their limited temporal extent in children's lives (Cooper Marcus, 1978, p. 38).

Although Cooper Marcus supports the importance of experience in creating a sense of place, she believes that a considerable amount of time in a place is not necessary to develop strong place sentiments, attachments, and meanings, in direct contrast with Relph and Hay. For Cooper Marcus, then, one need not be an insider to connect to a place in a profound way, one need only experience it. Similarly, Tuan (1975) questions the presumed relationship between length of stay and sense of place:

> If experience takes time, the passage of time itself does not ensure experience. One person may know a place intimately after a five-year sojourn; another has lived there all his life and it is to him as unreal as the unread books on his shelf (p. 164).

My analysis of respondents' sense of place in Hinton and Jasper supports Tuan and Cooper Marcus' less deterministic conceptualization. Long-time residents did have a different sense of place than newer residents. Long-time residents often expressed their place as a part of them, and this was not common with newer residents. However, I found no indication that the sense of place of newer residents was any less important, profound, or emotional. Levels of attachment and satisfaction were high for both long and short-term residents.

The second theme to emerge in Cooper Marcus' study is the importance of hiding places:

> Three kinds of hiding places appeared in my class sample: man-made spaces, such as culverts, shacks, porches, and closets taken over by children for their own particular use; hiding places molded out of the natural landscape; and places specifically constructed, such as treehouses or forts (Cooper Marcus, 1978, p. 38).

Cooper Marcus' theorizing on the importance of private and personal places for children is a captivating idea. Most significantly for place theory, the hiding places are never simply accepted, they must first be re-created. The common thread in the types of hiding places that Cooper Marcus defines is that the children make the places their own through action and interaction, and thus 'take over' that place. If parents create a special nook for children to play in, that space is not acceptable until it is re-created by the children (Cooper Marcus, 1978, p. 38). This is a strong indication of the necessity of experiencing place in order to connect with it.

From a natural resource perspective, Brandenburg and Carroll (1995) also contend that experience is vital to how individuals view place. In their qualitative analysis of rural residents' conceptions of place in reference to the management of a local river drainage, one of their primary conclusions was that "individual place experience can alter one's group-based belief systems" (p. 395). According to Brandenburg and Carroll, personal encounters with a place, such as those experienced in fishing trips or family camping excursions, can profoundly affect how those individuals will respond to changes or proposed changes of those places. Personal experience can supersede peer group influence:

> Individuals who had not personally experienced the river drainage typically conveyed their understanding of how the drainage should be managed by using the language of their primary social group's common values. Conversely, individuals with a similar, if not identical dominant belief system, tended to describe a very different value system regarding a place they have experienced and described an attachment (Brandenburg and Carroll, 1995, p. 394).

In this case, those socially agreed upon meanings and beliefs about a place (i.e., "this is a logging town") can be replaced by an individual's personal encounters with that place. Brandenburg and Carroll also acknowledge, however, the importance of the meanings and values that are passed along to individuals through social processes. This idea of the social construction of place is addressed next.

Place is Socially Constructed

> Landscapes are the symbolic environments created by human acts of conferring meaning to nature and the environment, of giving the environment definition and form from a particular angle of vision and through a special filter of values and beliefs. Every landscape is a symbolic environment (Greider and Garkovich, 1994, p. 1).

The physical environment does not become a place or a landscape until it has been filtered through human perception. Greider and Garkovich (1994) illustrate this by using the example of an open field that will hold different meanings for different individuals and the groups they represent. For a developer, an empty field holds promise of development; for a farmer, that same field has the potential to grow crops; and, for a hunter, that field is a likely place to find deer. The importance and meanings of a place is not immanent to that place, but rather is brought to the physical environment by the person experiencing it. In the section above, we discussed the importance of experience in creating place. However, the values and beliefs that individuals bring to spaces will powerfully affect how those places are perceived, and in turn how they are experienced. Thus, the social construction of place is intimately bound with experience of place.

The psychological and social processes that contribute to place—or the social construction of place—have received more scholarly attention than the other two components of place outlined in this proposal. In *Place Attachment* (1992), Altman and

Low define place as "space that has been given meaning through personal, group or cultural processes" and note that "place attachment involves an interplay of affect and emotions, knowledge and beliefs, and behaviors and actions in reference to a place" (p. 5). William and Patterson (1994) contend that "physical space becomes place through a process of attaching meaning to a particular geographic location; be it a chair in the living room; one's home, neighborhood, city, region, landscape, or nation" (p. 6). Fritz Steele, in his wonderful architectural treatment of place in *The Sense of Place*, writes, "Sense of place is created by the setting combined with what a person brings to it. In other words, to some degree we create our own places, they do not exist independent of us" (1981, p. 9).

The diversity of writings with regard to place construction covers a range of topics such as place and identity creation (Feldman, 1990; Lavin, 1984; Proshansky, 1983; Rivlin, 1982; Sarbin, 1983; Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996), place and life stage (Hay 1998a; Lavin 1984), migration and sense of place (Feldman, 1990; Rudzitis, 1991; 1993), rootedness and bondedness (Riger and Lavrakas, 1981), the role of institutions and social processes in place creation (Pred 1983; Stokowski 1991; Stowkowski and Antholine, 1995) and place dependence (Stokols and Schumaker, 1981). What these writings all have in common is the underlying assertion that place is determined in large part by what an individual brings to it.

Lavin (1984) draws from Proshanksy (1978) and the social psychology of Marcia (1966) to connect place, self-identity and life stage. Lavin draws on Marcia's four ego-identity statuses—moratorium, foreclosure, achievement, and diffusion—to explain place for those in identity crisis (Lavin, 1984, p. 54). A person in moratorium experiences a shift in feelings about place. In this status "home territories" lose "their positive emotional valence" (p. 54) and distant places become attractive. Thus, the "feeling of being inexorably bound to a particular place and routine would be a particularly strong and distasteful feeling for the individual in moratorium status" (p. 54). For those who experience identity foreclosure personal crisis is averted and the ready-made identity supplied from one's social milieu is accepted. Identity achievement on the other hand is considered a successful conclusion of the identity crisis and "is less dependent on external props" for its realization (p. 55). However, the "individual who fails to resolve the identity crisis and thus develops identity diffusion would have the weakest ties to place consistent with such an individual's avoidance of any attachments which in some way define the person" (p. 55).

For Lavin, then, place will mean different things depending on what stage of life and identity crisis an individual is in, and this in turn may affect experience. I will discuss later how the life stage of Jasper residents did affect the use and perception of those residents' places. While this is a specific use of situated identity theory in relation to place, other authors approach the connection between place and identity more broadly. Feldman (1990), for example, speaks not only of self-identity and place-identity, but expands these concepts to include the idea of settlement-identity. Her assertion is that mobile individuals are more likely to relocate in settings similar to those that were of importance to them during their individual identity creation. This is similar to the theory of generic place dependence, which deals with the potential of a particular place to satisfy the needs and goals of an individual compared to other places that could also satisfy these needs (Stokols and Schumaker, 1981).

Rudzitis (1993) touches on migration and place perceptions. He quotes Wallace Stegner: "…people come to the west following the dream of escape from industrial civilization and its discontents. They want healthful space, clean air, sun, skiing, a vigorous outdoor life, access to mountain and desert wilderness, and emancipation from the dirt, crime, and crowding of the cities" (p. 525). Rudzitis contrasts these images of the west—that inspire people to migrate there—with the very different reality of the west.

He writes, "With 84 percent of its population living in metropolitan areas, the west is an urban region, but that is not its popular image" (p. 525). For Rudzitis, it is important to understand "why people move or stay" (1991, p. 86), and he contends that the answers are unlikely to be found in economic considerations (1991; 1993). Rather, Rudzitis urges researchers and policy implementers to look to the history, myth and imagery that is bound up in place, for it is here that he feels people find their sense of place, and it is this sense of place that is a large part of current migration patterns (Rudzitis 1993). The 'reality' of a place is often less important than the popular conceptions and perceptions of that place.

Williams and Patterson (1994) echo this sentiment when they write of the need for natural resource managers to search out the symbolic meanings of places that may be affected by resource extraction:

> Greater recognition of intangible values helps managers understand why people care so passionately about the management of a particular resource…It recognizes that resources are not just raw materials to be inventoried and managed as a commodity, but also and more importantly, [are] places with a history, places that people care about, places that embody a sense of belonging and purpose that give meaning to life (William and Patterson 1994, p. 15).

Place, therefore, is socially relevant and symbolically rife with meaning, transcending the mere physicality of the place. The majority of authors who deal with this construction and interpretation of place deal with how the individual perceives place. However, there is growing awareness and questioning with regard to the role of institutions and power structures in creating place meanings that individuals then incorporate and adhere to. Pred (1983) states, "…sense of place is too frequently seen as a free-floating phenomenon, in no way influenced either by historically specific power relationships that enable some to impose upon others their view of the natural and acceptable, or by social and economic constraints on action and thereby thought" (p. 50).

Pred (1983) urges sociologists to acknowledge that sense of place "cannot be separated from…social interaction and socialization in the concrete situations provided by family, school, workplace, and other institutions" (p. 51). I will pursue this line of theorizing in my Land Management and Sense of Place section.

Although recent attempts to address the role of institutions in creating place meanings (such as Stedman et al.(proposal); Stokowski 1991) introduce a new approach to investigating the social construction of place, the underlying premise is not new. Place is riddled with the meanings and symbols that individuals bring to it. How these symbols and meanings are created and from where they emanate is open to deliberation, but the result is the same: place is meaning.

Sense of place may preclude attempts to approach place issues through separate components of place (experience, meanings, and physical setting). While authors often seem to favour a particular component of place in their analysis—place as experience or place as meaning—there is still much overlap. Tuan (1977), for instance, draws a distinction between those senses of place that are purely visual (or symbolic) and those that are created through continued and intimate contact and experience. Relph's (1976) distinction between authentic and inauthentic senses of place also implies a continuum of sense of place, where some may be more symbolic or meaning-laden (inauthentic) while others may be a more subtly blended mix of experience and meaning (authentic).

So, place is created by experience, but experience can be perceived differently depending on what an individual is bringing to the encounter. Likewise, place can be rife with symbolism and meaning (i.e., the Statue of Liberty, the Grand Canyon, or the Canadian Rockies) but these meanings, and thus the 'place', may change once experienced first-hand by the individual. The relationship between experience and meaning then is not distinct but rather dialectic: each acts upon the other in the creation of place. The vast majority of place theory ends at this point, the interaction between experience and meaning, but there is still a third component to place.

Place as Location

Freudenburg et al. (1995) deal with what they perceive as a disjunction of biophysical and social elements in relation to place. They begin by highlighting the opposing camps of environmental determinism and sociocultural determinism (1995), contending that neither is productive. While they defend sociologists, saying that most would not explicitly ignore the physical environment, they conclude that the environment is, nevertheless, largely ignored. They argue further that merely "acknowledg[ing] the importance of both sets of considerations—the social and the biophysical" (1995, p. 365) still misses the point, which for Freudenburg et al., is to move away from the nature/society divide:

> …"physical facts" are likely in many cases to have been shaped strongly by social construction processes, while at the same time, even what appear to be "strictly social" phenomena are likely to have been shaped in important if often overlooked ways by the fact that social behaviors often respond to stimuli and constraints from the biophysical world (1995, p. 366).

Freudenburg et al. raise an issue that most place scholars still have not acknowledged: that place may have effects that are not obvious and thus influence what appear to be purely social phenomena. They use the analogy of a magnet to illustrate how difficult separating the physical and social factors may be when considering issues of place:

> …it can prove to be no more possible to effect a clean and unambiguous separation of the physical and social than to saw apart the north and south poles of a magnet: Even if the magnet is sawed precisely in half, the net result will be two magnets, each with a north and south pole (1995, p. 371).

Their argument, then, is to understand the "fundamental interconnectedness" of biophysical and social factors of place-making, "comprehending not the separations" of these "but the inseparability" (1995, p. 371). What is unique about this approach in a sociological context—and even more broadly, in a social sciences context—is that the physical environment is allowed to play a role in place, which, despite all the rhetoric, is not a possibility that is commonly pursued in sense of place theorizing. Even though these authors stress the inseparability of social and environmental elements of place, they do attempt to isolate elements in their research. My research also carried this as a major research incentive: to attempt to bring to light how the biophysical could affect a sense of place.

Freudenburg et al. were attempting to view the effects of technology on social perceptions of place, over *time*. Thus, they chose a physical location (Iron Mountain) that had changed imperceptibly over the last couple hundred years in order to gauge how place perceptions and meanings varied over time. This contributes to sense of place theorizing by including in their research design the possibility that physical factors may play a role in human-place interactions.

Several questions arise with regard to the role of biophysical factors of place. Are there physical components of place that encourage or discourage experience? Are there places that have ability to affect a variety of individuals in similar ways despite the different historical and social background of the individuals? While there is no doubt that experience and constructivism play an important role in place creation, is there any way to ascertain the role that physical elements play, and to whom?

MacLeod (2000) asserts that earlier works dealing with landscape and place dealt primarily with the physical and the material rather than the social, and Gustafson (2000) argues that 'unique' places are the usual places of study as opposed to the common, or everyday places (and experiences). It is certainly the case that previous work touched on physical location and that the 'distinctiveness' of place has been addressed, or at the very least, utilized, but few have done so in conjunction with the other facets of place—experience and meaning.

There are a few exceptions, however. Stedman (2003) challenges the largely taken-for-granted notion that place is primarily a construction:

> This paper addresses this disconnect, suggesting that the physical environment itself contributes to sense of place through specifiable mechanisms. Although social constructions are important, they hardly arise out of thin air: the local environment sets bounds and gives form to these constructions (p. 1).

Stedman asserts that physical factors do play a role, and while he takes care to ensure that he does not believe it to be a deterministic role, he does feel it is a role that should not be overlooked in place research. Stedman attempts to discern the magnitude of effect from the physical environment and to explore possible mechanisms through which it could function. Using LISERL software to model the direct and indirect relationships between different place variables, Stedman concludes that place attachment and satisfaction are affected by physical factors, but in different ways. He finds that satisfaction is directly affected by physical quality (lake clarity, depth and remoteness, in his study), but that attachment is only indirectly affected. According to his results, Stedman concludes that attachment does not decrease with the changing of the physical landscape (i.e., more shoreline development) but that the meanings that are used to characterize that place change. In this way, "shoreline development changes the symbolic base of attachment without affecting overall attachment" (Stedman, 2003, p. 16).

My research will add to this assertion, showing that residents need not only change their symbolic base of attachment in order to cope with change, but that they may also adapt their use of their environment to accommodate the symbolism they feel most attached to in their place. If their wilderness becomes too crowded they simply find ways to recreate away from the crowds, and this allows them to 'feel' that they are still in wilderness, far from civilization.

Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) deal primarily with identity-process theory in relation to place. They utilize a model that consists of four main identity principles: continuity, or the ability of places and objects to remind people of their past, and to complement their values; self-efficiency, or the desire to live in places that support their daily activities; self-esteem refers to the ability of place to contribute to people's sense of worth; and, distinctiveness, or the uniqueness of a particular environment that enables people to differentiate themselves from others (Horwitz et al., 2001). While their model provides ample room for theorizing and categorizing how social and psychological processes can affect place creation and identity, the "distinctiveness of place" category also allows room for the effects of physical location to be considered, because it acknowledges the specificity of place, and the possibility that biophysical characteristics of place may play an important role in place creation.

Another exception to this oversight of 'physical place' is found in Brandenburg and Carroll (1995):

> Places are both enabling and embedding, in that physical locations affect people and people affect and construct social meanings of those physical locations. The creation of place consists of recurring patterns of interaction between individuals and their environment. Thus, place is created by people/nature reciprocal relationships (p. 395).

While for Brandenburg and Carroll the purpose of their research was to discover the meanings embedded in place, they were also sensitive to the issue of place enabling experience.

Horwitz et al. (2001) take this line of thinking a step further. Bridging topics as diverse as biodiversity, endemism, sense of place, and ecosystem management, the authors contend that the physical and the social can meet in powerful ways that often go unacknowledged by social scientists, conservation scientists and health officials alike. Drawing on place identity theorists such as Proshansky et al. (1987), Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996), and Massey (1994), as well as the restoration theories of Korpela (2001), the authors contend that the biophysical environment—in conjunction with other social and psychological processes—can dramatically affect people, to the point of decreased mental health or even suicide. The article focuses on aquatic ecosystems in Australia, but touches on a number of environmental systems throughout that continent.

Using a farmer in rural Australia as an example, the authors argue that the losses that occur due to environmental degradation and change could lead to a loss of home, status, activity, self-worth, and even a loss of opportunity to pass the place on to future generations (Horwitz et al., 2001, p. 258).

> Disruption to places, as in environmental degradation, is also associated with higher levels of stress, feelings of marginalization, avoidant coping, and lower levels of self-esteem….[this] may lead to feelings of hopelessness and helplessness, which in turn may speed up the degradation process. We know from research in mental health that hopelessness is closely linked to depression and thoughts of suicide (Chochinov et al., 1996). However, environmental degradation is rarely acknowledged as a factor contributing to depression and suicide (Horwitz et al., 2001, p. 258).

Certainly, this type of depression and mental state is not solely due to the physical environment, but also to the meanings, values and emotions that are tied up in that landscape and way of life. However, this does begin to address how deeply rooted some of these emotions can be in the landscape.

Another example given by the authors concerns management of landscapes that can lead to environmental degradation, which can then negatively affect the people who live there. The example they give is that of mosquitoes that vector different diseases, and which can cause serious health problems, and even death, in humans:

> Of particular importance to local people's attachment to a geographical area (like a wetland) is the degree to which that area, and the biota it harbors (like mosquitoes), challenge personal health and safety (Horwitz et al., 2001, p. 259).

In Australia, and many parts of the world, mosquitoes that vector disease are a serious environmental consideration when living in a place. While poor individuals may not be able to leave an area because of such risks, those with the means to choose their place of attachment could very well be deterred by this biophysical consideration. Canadians have nothing comparable to this health risk. With the exception of the West Nile virus—a recent addition to a limited portion of southern Canada's fauna—there are no such mosquito-vectored diseases in Canada that could negatively affect one's health. However, there are vast stretches of Canada that have an overwhelming abundance of mosquitoes and flies. This abundance of biting insects is a biophysical deterrent to settlement in many parts of Canada. This goes beyond a discourse that defines place solely as the meanings and social construction of those who live there, and highlights a very material and physical consideration that must be dealt with in order to live in these places.

This is an excellent example of place contributing to its own definition due to its biophysical characteristics. If experience can lead to meaning, then experience and the type of experience (positive/negative, diverse/limited) are important to consider. In a place that is swarming with biting insects (disease-carrying or not), the desire to experience that environment is likely to be lower than it would be in a similar biophysical environment that does not have biting insects. In this way, such places—in a very physical way—can affect how they are experienced, and therefore, how they are defined and what they come to represent and mean. My data from Jasper and Hinton will show that a similar physical phenomenon is functioning between the changing light on the mountains, and the emotions it evokes in residents of both communities.

Place Inhabited

Korpela (2001) uses attention restoration theory to elaborate how restorative experiences are often situated in favourite places. Drawing from place identity theorizing, Korpela argues that places help individuals achieve balance; make sense of the world and self; and, to improve interactions with others (Horwitz et al., 2001). Directed attention capacity is the source from which individuals draw for domains of activity such as work and interpersonal relations. According to Korpela, "directed attention capacity is subject to fatigue, which leaves the individual less capable of dealing with uncertainty and warding off confusion" (2001, p. 575). Korpela contends that this has important implications for well being, because directed attention fatigue can lead to "negative emotion, irritability, decreased sensitivity to interpersonal cues, performance decrements on tasks requiring directed attention, and a reduced ability to plan" (p. 575). Further,

> It is assumed that the absence of cognitive clarity is experienced as unpleasant and that attentionally fatigued individuals will want to recover their ability to focus (p. 576).

Attention restoration theory sees restoration occurring when: (1) there is psychological distance from aspects of one's usual routines (being away); (2) there is effortless attention being drawn to objects in the environment, or when the person is engaged in making sense of the environment (fascination); (3) where there is immersion in a coherent physical or conceptual environment that is of sufficient scope for exploration (extent); and, (4) when there is a good match between the person's inclinations and purposes and the environmental supports for such activities (compatibility) (Korpela, 2001, p. 576). Restoration could potentially progress through different successive stages that see the individual becoming more calm, and increasing their directed attention capacity, to more progressed stages wherein the individual is able to reach a contemplative state of mind in which she is able to consider her life and her place in the world. For the highest degree of restoration all four components described above would need to be well represented in the restorative environment or experience (Korpela, 2001).

In a series of related studies, Korpela has connected the rationale given by people for visiting favourite places to the attention restoration theory literature, since the reasoning behind visiting favourite places closely mirrors the necessary components outlined above for successful restoration. This work illustrates a compelling synthesis and utilization of all the components of place: meaning, experience, and physical location. 'Being away', 'fascination', 'extent', and 'compatibility' all entail a rich amalgamation of the place characteristics. They are infused with social constructions, and the physical characteristics that produce and reproduce these. Also present are the meanings and values that are created from experience, and/or the experiences that are created or encouraged due to the meanings and values that individuals bring to those physical locations.

Korpela, then, has engaged place theorizing in probably the most complete sense of the word, drawing from all of the commonly cited components of place and using them each more fully than most other researchers have managed to do. Korpela provides the theoretical framework for us to pursue the possibility that certain places are more meaningful than others, and not solely due to processes of socialization and constructivism, but also due in part to the physical environment itself. In this way, Korpela has moved place beyond categorization as either place of meaning, experience or physical location into a richer conception of place as inhabited.

The idea of 'place inhabited' as a preferred conception that amalgamates all the characteristics of place into one is derived from Nabhan (1997):

> …[T]he term *habitat* is etymologically related to *habit*, *inhabit*, and *habitable*; it suggests a place worth dwelling in, one that has *abiding* qualities. I could not make a machinelike *ecosystem* my abode for long, but I could comfortably nestle down within a *habitat* (p. 3).

Favourite places, and places that are habitable or have abiding qualities, are a complex mix of physical environment, meanings and values about what makes a place habitable (social and psychological processes), and experiences.

By acknowledging the “inseparability” of place components, while still attempting to draw out examples of how each manifest themselves in residents’ senses of place, my research has attempted to move into this realm of ‘place as inhabited’. I have attempted to take advantage of an innovative photo-assisted methodology, and the rich detail that this qualitative methodology has allowed, in assessing how residents of Hinton and Jasper define and react to their place. What I have found is that place is ‘worth dwelling in’ for a complex web of reasons, where the social, experiential and physical all take part in shaping these residents’ senses of place.

Chapter Three

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The literature review presents a number of gaps and opportunities for further exploration and investigation into sense of place, and it is these gaps and lesser-explored areas that have sparked the research questions that direct and focus my research objectives, and that guide the methods and analysis of this study.

The following questions lay the foundation for this research, but it is important to note that, as a qualitative researcher, I have strived to be open to the topics and themes that participants themselves wished to discuss, even if these departed somewhat from my initial questions. While still guided by clear and precise research objectives and questions, this research strives to understand how respondents communicate their meanings, emotions, and values in relation to place.

Guiding Questions

There are four primary questions that guide this research:

1. What are the underlying components that contribute to one's sense of place in Hinton and Jasper as communicated by the respondents themselves?
2. What meanings do respondents associate with these underlying components of place?
3. Do the different land management systems of Hinton and Jasper affect respondents' senses of place, and if so how?
4. Do the physical components of place manifest themselves only through social processes that attach meaning to the landscape, or do the physical qualities themselves also assert independent influence over how that place is defined?

Expectations

In response to the primary questions that guide this research:

1. I expect physical and recreational components of place to be important to respondents from both Hinton and Jasper due to the high quality physical landscape and recreational opportunities that are available in each community. However, I expect Jasper participants to indicate a greater attachment to the physical landscape due to the social processes present in Jasper National Park that celebrate and highlight the physical environment, and due to the more dramatic landscape that surrounds Jasper.
2. I expect that a diversity of meanings will emerge in regards to these two places. I expect that the meanings respondents hold in regards to their place, and in regards to the components of place that they indicate as being of importance, will differ between individuals and even between towns. For example, I expect that even though the physical landscape will play a role in the sense of place of all participants, the nature of this role will vary depending on the differing meanings of that landscape to different respondents.
3. a) I expect that the type of land management system that surrounds each community will play a significant role in how respondents relate to their place. In other words, I expect respondents in Hinton to display a greater tendency towards consumptive forms of recreation, such as quadding and hunting, than those from Jasper. This will result simply because of the land use restrictions in the national park, although Jasper respondents may use areas outside of the park for activities they are not able to carry out within the park.

b) I also expect that one's occupation (which is largely dependent on the land management system that governs each area) will be related to how one relates to her place. In other words, I expect that a respondent who works in the forest industry will likely describe a different sense of place than one who works for Parks Canada.

4. I expect that physical place has the ability to affect one's sense of place above and beyond the social processes that attach meaning to the landscape. In other words, I expect that the landscape will hold multiple meanings for respondents, some of which will be based on the social construction of place, but others that will be based on the physical qualities themselves.

Components of Sense of Place in Hinton and Jasper

The foundation on which this research will stand relates to how participants choose to discuss their sense of place. What are the underlying components that contribute to one's sense of place in Hinton and Jasper? The literature is clear about what constitutes a sense of place: the physical, social, and experiential (Brandenburg and Carroll, 1995; Relph, 1976). However, to gain an understanding of how perceptions of place vary depending on physical location—and therefore how these components vary in importance—one must vary the environmental setting (Freudenburg et al., 1995). In Hinton and Jasper, then, how is sense of place discussed? What components of place do respondents indicate as being important to their senses of place?

I expect that because these two communities are located in impressive physical environments, physical and recreational components will prove to be important in both Hinton and Jasper. However, I expect Jasper respondents to stress a greater importance in regards to the physical environment than Hinton respondents, because 1) Jasper is situated right within the dramatic topography of the Rocky Mountains, while Hinton is within view of, but still outside of, the Rocky Mountains (i.e., the physical environment differs even though the places are in close proximity); and, 2) because the Jasper townsite is located within a national park that celebrates the area's environmental splendour, whereas Hinton is located with a landscape that supports forestry and mining operations.

Meanings of Respondents' Components of Place

Altman and Low (1992) define place as "space that has been given meaning through personal, group or cultural processes" (p. 5). Many place researchers stress the importance of meanings and the social construction of place when studying sense of place (Greider and Garkovich, 1994; William and Patterson, 1994). This research documents an understanding of the underlying components of respondents' senses of place, as well as the meanings that respondents associate with these components.

I expect that a diversity of meanings will be held by respondents in relation to their place even while the components of place themselves may be the same. In other words, even though many respondents may indicate that recreation is an important part of their sense of place, the meanings of this recreation may differ considerably between respondents.

Land Management

Do the different land management systems of Hinton and Jasper affect respondents' senses of place, and if so how? There is growing awareness and questioning with regard to the role of institutions and power structures in creating place meanings that individuals then incorporate and adhere to (Pred, 1983; Williams and Patterson, 1994). Pred (1983) states, "sense of place is too frequently seen as a free-floating phenomenon, in no way influenced either by historically specific power relationships that enable some to impose upon others their view of the natural and acceptable, or by social and economic constraints on action and thereby thought" (p. 50). It is the intent of this research, then, to explore the influence of these dominant land management systems on the sense of place of respondents.

Hinton is managed as a utilitarian or industrial landscape, with the forest, oil and gas, and mining industries all playing a large role in how the landscape looks, is managed, and in the prosperity of the town. This utilitarian governance of the physical environment may affect respondents' conception of, use, and attachment to their place. Hinton respondents may exhibit attachments to physical components of place, but I expect that respondents may show efforts to reconcile the industrial, extractive activities that occur on their landscape with their meanings of the landscape, in order to deem the physical aspects of their landscape satisfactory.

Jasper is supported by a preservationist land management system, is visited by a million visitors per year, and inspires celebratory depictions, stories, and information about its physical landscape. Previous place research, such as that by William and Patterson (1994), leads me to suspect that these social processes and structures that highlight Jasper's physical landscape will result in Jasper participants expressing more positive attachment to the landscape than Hinton respondents, who will likely communicate very different meanings regarding the landscape.

The two towns are situated within close proximity, share many landscape features, but consider themselves to be very different from one another. Much of this perceived difference comes from these very different land management systems that support each community. The one considers itself a forestry and mining town, and the other considers itself a "Parks" town. These town identities—an important component of place (Rudizits, 1993; Williams and Patterson, 1994)—and the surrounding land management systems should manifest themselves through differences in meanings regarding place and how these two communities use, discuss, and attach to place.

Due to the industrial nature of the landscape surrounding Hinton, and therefore the fewer restrictions present there, in respects to use, I suspect that Hinton participants will likely indicate greater use of motorized and consumptive forms of recreation (i.e., quadding and hunting). This will likely not occur in Jasper due to park regulations, although Jasper residents may choose to utilize landscapes outside of the park for activities they cannot conduct within the park's boundaries.

It is likely that not only the differences in the physical landscape and use patterns will affect how residents discuss sense of place, but also the differences in the types of individuals that are drawn to each community. The very different land management systems result in a different economic structure, and therefore the type of work that is available in the two communities differs greatly. Those who are attracted to Hinton, the forestry and mining town, may be different than those attracted to Jasper, the "Parks" town. Differences in the social make-up of each community may influence how sense of place is expressed.

Physical Components of Place

The literature review first led me to question how the physical components of place affect sense of place compared to the more commonly studied social components of place. My background in the biological sciences as well as work such as that by Freudenburg et al. (1995), Horwitz (2001), Korpela (2001), and Stedman (2003) led me to question the commonly held opinion that social construction of place is able to explain all of the complexities that contribute to one's sense of place (Greider and Garkovich, 1994). It is the intent of this research to explore the possibility that the physical elements of place are of themselves an integral component to the sense of place of Hinton and Jasper respondents.

Although Hinton and Jasper share a great deal of landscape and habitat similarities, they also have physical differences. Jasper is nestled right within the Rocky Mountains and so is surrounded by a dramatic and picturesque landscape, whereas Hinton sits just outside of the mountains in the foothills. While the mountains are within view of Hinton, and are easily accessible, the town is surrounded by a less dramatic (rolling and undulating) topography. This difference in the physical landscape may affect the respondents' senses of place. The physical may prove to play a larger role in the lives of Jasper respondents due to its dramatic nature, while it may prove to play a small role in Hinton due to its less dramatic character.

I speculate that the physical landscape plays a role in attaching these respondents to their place, not solely due to the social conceptions that are embedded in this physical landscape, but also for the landscape itself. In other words, I expect that the landscape will hold multiple meanings for respondents, some of which will be based on the social construction of place, but others that will be based on the physical qualities themselves.

Chapter Four

METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS

To briefly recapitulate, my research objectives are 1) to explore sense of place in a manner that acknowledges the inseparability of the social and physical components of place, and therefore allows and encourages each to manifest itself through the research design and instrument; 2) to approach sense of place with an innovative methodology that can allow the richness and diversity of meanings, beliefs and values of place to be communicated; and, 3) to test this photo-assisted methodology for its effectiveness as a tool for forest policy makers, town managers and community researchers.

Research Approach

Although qualitative research and quantitative research have the capacity to complement each other in many ways, these two approaches to studying the social world differ markedly. While quantitative approaches strive to test hypotheses in conjunction with distinct variables and the relationship between them, qualitative research attempts to "develop an understanding of social life and discover how people construct meaning in natural settings" (Neuman, 2000, p. 71). This brief overview of social science research will contend that a qualitative approach to social science is most appropriate for this project.

Quantitative research approaches social science inquiry with testable hypotheses and concepts that are in the form of distinct variables, whereas qualitative research attempts to "capture and discover meaning once the researcher becomes immersed in the data" (Neuman, 2000, p. 123). This project is an attempt to explore the sense of place of residents from two communities, and while a number of research questions, assumptions and generalizations were present from the beginning, it has been the intent of this research to allow the respondents to provide the themes most important to their senses of place. While still guided by clear and precise research objectives and questions, this research strives to understand how respondents communicate their meanings, emotions, and values in relation to place. This sort of exploratory, theme-driven research that is premised on meanings and values is more amenable to a qualitative approach.

This project delves into residents' attachments and satisfaction in relation to place, as well as many of the meanings, emotions and values that permeate that place for them. As discussed above, many of these topics are difficult to verbalize and many important aspects of one's place may not be apparent to her until they are gone. Such deep-rooted topics and attachments are more accessible to a qualitative approach that allows for the time, individual interaction, and detail that these topics deserve and require. Quantitative research typically works with data in the form of numbers, and this requires topics that are transferable to numeric explication, documentation and/or presentation. The very nature of sense of place, with its topics that are hard to define and grasp, produces data that is hard to enumerate, and therefore more in line with qualitative approaches.

The research approach that drives this project, then, is a qualitative photo-assisted approach that is intended to stimulate and provide entry for improved communication between respondents and me in a semi-structured interview format. This was chosen not only because of the difficulty of attaining the depth of information I was searching for with a large sample of individuals, but also because of personal reasons. As I mentioned earlier, as a researcher, a large part of my desire to approach environmental management issues through the social sciences arose because of my growing dissatisfaction with research that was founded on quantitative methods alone. I was excited by the opportunity to explore an issue in depth and without the necessity of having to find ways to transform all findings into numerical form. Another primary aspect to this research is a comparative analysis of the senses of place between the two study communities. By comparing communities that are in close proximity and share a large amount of physical landscape, this study allows for comparison of how the physical and social aspects of sense of place are discussed by respondents from different land management areas and therefore with different primary employers.

Research Design

Because several of our research questions required assessing sense of place across a variety of landscape settings, we felt a comparative approach was most appropriate. This study compares two communities that are in close proximity to one another but that consider themselves to be very different from one another. While the two communities share much of the same physical landscape, Jasper is supported by a preservationist land management system (Jasper National Park) and Hinton is supported by an industrial or utilitarian land management system (forest and mining industries). The close proximity of these two communities and the shared physical landscape, contrasted with these differences in community structure, occupations, and land management systems, provide an excellent opportunity for exploring issues of the social and physical components of place attachment.

This study uses a qualitative methodological approach to explore the sense of place of respondents from Hinton and Jasper. The key research method was face-to-face interviews, however, these were facilitated by a photo-assignment that was used to improve communication between respondents and me. This study strives to understand the sense of place of respondents in both of these communities and to then compare sense of place between the two communities. These data were collected for a larger project that used the same data collection procedure across three provinces: Newfoundland, Manitoba and Alberta. This thesis deals only with the data collected for the Alberta component of this larger project.

This project entailed drawing a non-random sample population of residents using purposive snowball sampling protocol. The sample was constructed with the intent of incorporating as much diversity and variation within the sample as possible, drawing from across the range of gender, age, length of residence in the community, and occupation for both communities. This diversity in the sample allows for exploration into the physical and social components of sense of place, and how these may be represented differently depending on who is answering. Participants were asked to take photographs of 12 things that 'most attached them to their place', that 'made their place home for them', and 'those things that they would most miss if they had to leave'. Once the photographs were developed, a semi-structured interview was conducted with each participant to gain some general background information and to ensure that what was taken in the photograph was understandable to the researcher.

The elements that conspire to create an individual's sense of place are often difficult to communicate within the confines of typical survey and interview methodologies. Photographs were chosen as a means of communicating sense of place in conjunction with the semi-structured interviews for at least two reasons. First, we believed that it would invite participants to put more thought and deliberation into the project than would be the case with more typical methods. The process of thinking of 12 things to photograph, as well as the physical process of attaining the photograph (e.g., driving to a favourite spot, or visiting a favourite relative), would provide plenty of time for consideration and deliberation. It was believed that this would encourage more thoughtful responses than a simple question and answer session would. Second, the assignment of photographing those places or things that provide the most attachment, or that would be the most missed if one had to leave, required the participant to visualize and represent emotions, attachments and beliefs that were often "taken-for-granted" in daily life (Freudenburg et al. 1995, p. 372). The photo-assisted component of this project was expected to result in a greater quality or richness of feedback than that of more typical methodology.

The procedure and instrument that constitute this research were piloted in a pre-test with a non-random sample of 20 participants from a rural community in New Brunswick. The data collection techniques and the questionnaire that guide the semi-structured interviews in this project are the same as those used in the pilot study. The only difference between the research designs of this project with the pilot study is that the use of town hall meetings for recruiting participants was discontinued due to poor turnout in the pilot study, and due to the poor representation that was available from the town hall process. The interviews and photo-assisted methodology remained the same.

Sample Characteristics

The photo-assisted qualitative interview methodology that was employed for this project precluded the possibility of using a large random sample. A non-random, purposive sample was drawn from each community with the intent of providing as much representation from the communities as possible. I searched for many different perspectives in the communities, with the intent to include in my sample participants from across the range of gender, age, occupation and length of residence in these two communities. The photo-assisted methodology, as well as practical considerations for completing the field component of the project within a reasonable amount of time, limited the maximum possible sample size to 50 participants.

Because life stage was identified as a possible determinant of how one may attach to place, a wide range of ages was desired in the sample. In both communities, perspectives from all adult age groups were sought, with equal representation in gender. Not only age (or stage of life) was considered important, however, but also the length of time a respondent had spent in her/his community and whether she/he was born in that community or had come from away. These were other sample characteristics that were taken into consideration when constructing the sample, with the intent to investigate how the social versus physical aspects of place may differ in importance for those born in a community compared to those from away; for those who have lived for a long period in their place versus those who have lived there for a shorter period; and, between residents who experience their place at different stages of life.

I also considered a diversity of occupations to be important to providing a representative sample. In order to address the issue of whether sense of place is affected by occupation, income level, education, and dominant social group, participants were desired from across a diversity of professions. I wished to include in my sample those who were dependent on the extractive industries in Hinton, as well as those who were less dependent on these industries, such as those in the service industry, health care professionals, or government employees. Likewise, in Jasper I sought respondents from the across the primary employers: Parks Canada, the Canadian National Railroad, and the tourism industry.

Instrument

Face-to-face interviews have the highest response rate, permit the longest interviews, and therefore are the best instrument for posing complex questions and exploring complex topics (McCracken, 1988; Neuman, 2000). Face-to-face interviews allowed respondents and me to speak more freely and intimately about the respondent's attachments, satisfaction, meanings and emotions in regards to her place. Being present allows the researcher the opportunity to observe the respondent's place and pick up on non-verbal communication and visual aids. The interview format was therefore the most appropriate data collection method for this project.

As mentioned earlier, the complex nature of sense of place inquiries can often complicate communication about place. In order to clarify my intent as a researcher to respondents, and to provide a medium that would aid respondents in sharing sometimes hard to define concepts, photographs were used as an entry or stimulus to the interviews. Respondents were asked to take photographs of those things that most attached them to their place, and once these photographs were developed the semi-structured interview was conducted with the photographs present. The importance of the photographs was not only the subjects in the pictures themselves, but in many cases also the type of things that the photographs represented. While some photographs were taken specifically for the object depicted (e.g., the participant's home or family), others were taken to represent other things (e.g., a church to represent the architecture). Likewise, some landscape photos were taken to represent general ecological features (e.g., Roche Bonhomme was taken to show the sunrise) as opposed to bringing attention to a specific location of importance. Due to this variability in the reasoning behind photographs I explicitly asked about the 'substitutability of the attributes' that they had taken, if it was not obvious. I never asked about the substitutability of a family member, but with landscape shots it was important to clarify whether it was the particular mountain, lake or trail in the photograph that was central to the participant, or whether it was access to that type of landscape.

Further, the photographs guided the largest part of the interview, and served as a means for respondents to describe their sense of place to me during the interviews. The interview, then, was guided by the photographs themselves as well as by the research questions that drive this project. The interview guide also consisted of a number of general questions that were used to provide a participant profile, seeking information about her/his length of residence in the area, place of birth, occupation, etc. The participant was also asked her/his general views on the community, with such questions as, "Do you see yourself staying in this community?", "What could cause you to leave this community?", and "What would you like to see improved here?". Following this more general questioning, the second portion of the interview focused on each photograph individually, to ascertain the subject and meanings of the pictures, as well as the precise location where each photograph was taken (See Appendix A for complete Interview Guide). The same questions were asked of each participant in the same order. If a respondent's answer naturally led to a question that did not follow the order of questions in the interview guide, I would ask the question out of order to increase flow in the interview, but I would then return to the typical ordering of questions following this interruption.

As a researcher, I was also an important instrument in determining the quality of information gathered. Interview bias is something that all interviewers should be aware of when conducting interview research in order to ensure that the data collected are of the highest quality and are as reliable and valid as possible (Neuman, 2000). The amount of forethought, literature review, or related knowledge that the researcher has before entering a proposed study will greatly affect the extent to which analysis is carried out within the interviews themselves. For instance, the researcher with a strong grasp of the theory behind her chosen topic, and a clear conception of the questions she is pursuing—even if these questions are general or exploratory—will better be able to respond 'on the spot' during the interview to ask the 'right' questions, and follow up on statements and conversation that are most likely to lead to discussion that will benefit her research. As well, by rephrasing respondents' comments into her own words, the interviewer is able to test whether the meaning she is taking away is actually what the interviewee was meaning to convey (Kvale, 1996). Steps such as these reduce bias that is 1) the result of unintentional errors or interviewer sloppiness, such as misreading a question, misunderstanding a respondent, or omitting questions; 2) due to the influence of the interviewer's expectations about a respondents' answers; and, 3) due to the failure of the interviewer to probe effectively or at all. These were all considerations of which I was conscious throughout the interview process and that I attempted to avoid.

To reduce interview bias that results from respondent error—such as forgetting, embarrassment, misunderstanding, or discomfort—I attempted to create a friendly, relaxed and professional atmosphere in which respondents would feel comfortable conversing. Because I was the only interviewer for this project, there was consistency among the presentation of questions, interviewer appearance and presence, and observations of non-verbal communications. The interviews were conducted in a number of settings depending on the preference of interviewees. Office space was rented for interviews in which the respondent preferred to meet away from her home, and in all other cases interviews were conducted in the respondents' homes.

Something that I became aware of that was not obvious to me at the outset, was that encompassing a variety of perspectives in the communities made conducting interviews more challenging. The language and approach that worked in one interview did not work in the next. In general, the interviewees broke into two camps: those who were excited by the opportunity to talk, doing so with great ease and flow; and those who were more taciturn or laconic. This difference in volubility was certainly due to personality, but on occasion seemed to be associated with time limitations, and comfort with articulating personal thoughts. The 'time-crunched' participants usually had to squeeze in the interview between other commitments, and so were eager for the interview to be as efficient as possible, despite their apparent support for the project.

Participants with higher education seemed more comfortable sharing their opinion, and were more comfortable with the interview setting, in general. The others seemed less comfortable to be in such a 'formal' setting, and with these participants I took greater care to encourage a comfortable, informal environment. I am comfortable communicating across social and class boundaries, however, and my background in the biological sciences, and years spent working in the 'bush', allowed me to speak in a language that was more relatable to those who spent more time in the bush than in the office. Consequently, I did my best to accommodate the style and comfort level of each participant, conducting each interview in a manner that seemed most appropriate to that particular respondent.

Other common adjustments I made in differing contexts was to accommodate those more inclined to speech, or with those who seemed less crunched for time. In such cases, I took the opportunity to introduce a few of my general observations or initial findings with the participant, and listened to their feedback. For instance, I asked whether they thought what I was finding sounded plausible. Likewise, with those who appeared less attached to place I took advantage of their lukewarm attachment to ascertain what they found lacking in their community. I used this as a sort of triangulation on participants that painted only a rosy picture of their community. Many of these participants appeared more willing to 'say it like it was', whereas those with a strong sense of place may have been less willing to do so simply out of loyalty to their place.

The language that was used by participants affected the language that I used to conduct the interviews. Education played a large role in this. I could speak with those participants who were more educated in the language that I normally use at the university to speak of place. With those who left school at an earlier stage I found I had to translate my language for explaining and querying sense of place. Rather than serving as a source of frustration, I found this to be extremely rewarding. Speaking of sense of place in a plainer and unaccustomed language clarified many concepts and themes for me that had been glossed over in my ready-made sociological lingo. Interviews ranged in length from 45 minutes to 2 hours and 45 minutes, with most interviews taking from about 60 to 80 minutes.

Data Collection

Interviews were conducted from July 2001 to October 2001, with 45 respondents, 23 from Jasper and 22 from Hinton. The first respondents were approached by the researcher in public places around the community, and were chosen based on convenience or their openness to dialogue. For these first recruits, convenience and openness to dialogue typically meant conversing with someone in a profession that allowed them to converse with the general public, such as information attendants, servers in restaurants, etc. I introduced the project and outlined the general protocol to recruits verbally. All subsequent participants were primarily identified by the snowball method, through referrals from participants. These potential participants were contacted over the telephone, and I introduced myself as a referral from a particular person.

I explained to all potential recruits that I was a researcher for the Canadian Forest Service and University of Alberta and that I was looking for volunteers to take 12 photographs of those things that 'most attached them to their place', that 'they would most miss if they had to leave', and 'those things that made their place home for them'. If the respondent indicated an interest to hear more I proceeded to supply her/him with a detailed consent letter (on official Canadian Forest Service letterhead) that further explained what the project was about and what I was asking her/him to do, and how much time she/he would likely have to volunteer if she/he chose to participate (see

Appendix B). If I was speaking with the potential participant over the telephone, at this point I would inform her/him that I had a letter to further explain the project, and I asked if we could meet to further discuss the protocol for the project.

I gave participants time to read the letter fully. The letter made it clear that her/his participation was voluntary and as such she/he was free to withdraw from the project at any point. It also indicated that her/his photographs and information would be posted on a website for the purposes of the larger national project (beyond the scope of this thesis), unless she/he desired that it not be. Both the letter and my verbal instructions attempted to make it absolutely clear that any pictures or subjects she/he deemed important were fair game, within the town site itself or in the surrounding landscape. If someone was interested in participating, I would offer her/him the use of a disposable camera for the project, and informed her/him that I would pay for the developing costs of the film (whether she/he used my camera or her/his own). The majority accepted the use of the disposable cameras, and only a small number of participants preferred to use their own cameras.

At this point I then encouraged them to think their responses through, preferably by first sitting down over their morning coffee and writing a list of those twelve things that most attached them to their place, and then going out and finding ways to photograph those subjects. I warned them that some pictures would not be easy to represent through photographs, so imaginative solutions might be necessary. I did not set a rigid deadline for completion of the first part of the project. I told participants I would give them a week before I contacted them again. Once they had finished taking their photographs, I was to pick up their cameras to develop the film, and at that time we would schedule a time for the interview, which was the last component of their participation. Some participants finished within the first week, while the majority took two weeks to finish. There were a number of participants who took even longer.

After I had recruited a participant, I would ask that participant to suggest another potential participant. I encouraged participants to think of someone who would likely have a different perspective (due to occupation, worldview, age, length of residence, etc.) than herself or himself, or someone who would be interesting for, or interested in, this project. In many cases, this resulted in a small list of possible participants from each recruit and I would prioritize those on this list based on the type of individuals that I felt were still underrepresented in my sample. If any groups seemed to be missing, even after referrals from participants, I would target these and search out participants from them to ensure that these perspectives were accounted for in the sample.

Once the photographs were developed, a semi-structured interview was conducted with each participant, which, although it followed a general outline, maintained enough flexibility to accommodate discussion about topics important to the participant. Interviews were held in the location preferred by participants. I informed each participant that we could meet in an office building (at the Visitor Information Centre in Hinton, and at the Jasper National Park Administration Centre in Jasper), or we could meet in another location. Participants were then free to choose the location she/he preferred. Many interviews were conducted in participants' homes, and only a small number were held in the office setting. All interviews were digitally recorded, subject to consent of the participant, and I also took field notes throughout the interview.

Analysis

As Silverman attests, no research problem or question is approached without some sort of "model of looking at the world" (2001, p. 83). From the outset, I had in mind approaching people's place attachment and sense of place through a lens sensitive to the (possible) effects or influences of landscape and physical environment, in concert with, or in distinction from, those influences of social environment. This predilection towards issues of physical environment on social construction of place not only shaped how I framed questions for my respondents, but it also affected how I heard, and thus analyzed, their answers in the interviews themselves.

According to Kvale (1996), the ideal interview is one that is being analyzed and interpreted as it is being conducted. The interviewer can do this through simple techniques of verification and repetition. By rephrasing respondents' comments into her own words, the interviewer is able to test whether the meaning she is taking away is actually what the interviewee was meaning to say. As well, the interviewer is able to use the interview time itself as a forum for confirming or rejecting her hypothesis, or testing and working through emerging themes and findings (Kvale, 1996).

> In such forms of analysis—interpreting "as you go"—considerable parts of the analysis are "pushed forward" into the interview situation itself. The final analysis then becomes not only easier and more amenable, but will also rest on more secure ground. Put strongly, the ideal interview is already analyzed by the time the tape recorder is turned off (Kvale, 1996, p. 178).

This is not to preclude further analysis, or to contend that further analysis is not necessary, but rather to make it absolutely clear that analysis does not begin once all the interviews are completed, but rather is continuous through each and every interview. And further, the amount of forethought, literature review, or related knowledge that the researcher has before entering a proposed study will also greatly affect the extent to which analysis is carried out within the interviews themselves. For instance, the researcher with a strong grasp of the theory behind her chosen topic, and a clear conception of the questions she is pursuing—even if these questions are general or exploratory—will be better able to respond 'on the spot' during the interview to ask the 'right' questions, and follow up on statements and conversation that are most likely to lead to discussion that will benefit her research.

The immediate, spontaneous analysis that constitutes 'question and response' greatly affects the course of any interview. In the interviews I conducted, as communication was proceeding, my 'model of looking at the world' of place attachment and sense of place was influencing which lines of inquiry I would continue and which I would leave unelaborated. In this way, my analysis of these interviews was already well underway. Despite my continuous attempts to remain focused on the narration of the respondent—to allow her to guide the subject matter—I was continually bombarded by notes from myself, reminding me of a line of thinking that such a comment (from my interviewee) could support or discredit. These proddings from my theoretical-self helped encourage or discourage the next course of the interview through both verbal and non-verbal signals from me to the respondent. This does not depict a poor interview technique, but is simply a fact that needs to be acknowledged, considered, and utilized. All interviewers are subject to this type of back and forth between the knowledge she brings to the interview and the knowledge the interviewee is sharing. The important thing is to be sensitive to the fact that analysis is already progressing, and to take steps to foster an open mind and spirit—to listen attentively—to what the interviewee is saying. As Bourdieu (1996) states:

> ...One only needs to have conducted an interview once to become conscious of how difficult it is to concentrate continuous attention on what is being said (and not solely in words) and think ahead to questions which might fall 'naturally' into the flow of the conversation following a kind of theoretical 'line' (p. 20).

Seale's (1999) language for dealing with the reality of 'analysis on the fly' consists of 'indexing' and 'coding', and provides both his justification and acknowledgement of such analysis, but also his contention that excluding the possibility of further meanings too early is undesirable. For Seale, indexing is that which occurs earlier in the research process and coding in later stages:

> Coding is, of course, an attempt to fix meaning, constructing a particular vision of the world that excludes other possible viewpoints….Coding that fixes meanings too early in the analytic process may stultify creative thought, blocking the analyst's capacity for seeing new things. The early stages of coding are therefore more appropriately called 'indexing', acting as signposts to interesting bits of data, rather than representing some final argument about meaning (p. 154).

My analysis did not begin with the completion of my transcriptions of recorded interviews into written text, but began when my first interviewee responded to my first question. Analysis does not begin once all the interviews are completed, but rather is continuous through each and every interview. As respondents replied to queries, or as they elaborated on issues or anecdotes relevant to their conception of place, my listening was a form of analysis, and not the least form of it. This is not to say that conclusions were reached by the time interviews were completed, but instead to acknowledge that the later stages of analysis were greatly affected by earlier stages.

Analytical Framework

> The most frequent form of interview analysis is probably an ad hoc use of different approaches and techniques for meaning generation….[I]n this case no standard method is used for analyzing the whole of the interview material. There is instead a free interplay of techniques during the analysis (Kvale, 1996, p. 203).

I have adopted no technical or theoretical approach that can capture my analysis in a couple of words. Instead, analysis has been an on-going relationship, first with the interviewees themselves, and then from continued and varied approaches at looking at the transcribed texts from the interviews, and from the photographs. While the initial interviews provide the real jump off point for analysis, the repeated visitations to the transcribed texts have allowed added textures of meaning to emerge from the data. As Kvale warns:

> The transcripts should not be the subject matter of an interview study…but rather be means, tools, for the interpretation of what was said during the interviews. Although produced as an oral discourse, the interview appears in the form of a written text. The transcript is a bastard, it is a hybrid between an oral discourse unfolding over time, face to face, in a lived situation—where what is said is addressed to a specific listener present—and a written text created for a general, distant, public (1996, p. 182).

The interviews themselves were the source of the meanings and themes that were the focus of the second part of my analysis. The meanings and themes that were communicated to me—and that I helped in communicating—in the interviews are the raw material that I have spent the remaining time in analysis fleshing out. My analysis can be categorized into two main components: (1) the interviews themselves and (2) interaction with the transcripts.

The analysis of the interviews themselves consists of the constant organization and categorization—or as Seale would say, indexing—that takes place during the interviews. It also includes the time spent after the interview, and between interviews, trying to make sense of the interviews as a whole. As more and more interviews accumulated, I was constantly making notes and looking for patterns between interviews. This analysis is one abstraction above that of the interview analysis, because I was analyzing the interviews, in plural. Furthermore, what became apparent was that regardless of those topics and themes that I had brought to the project, and that I had expected to be of importance, the interviews themselves were leaving certain unexpected topics foremost in my thoughts. I found this level of analysis intriguing, because it was not a case of clever deductive work, or keen discernment, on my part, but instead was more like a constant noise that I could not help but notice. The interviews were speaking for themselves. The best example of this has to do with the importance of the mountains that became a topic addressed in every interview, but one that I had not expected to be so interesting.

Interaction with the transcripts—the data—was of a different sort, but I feel it was strongly influenced and directed by the quality of the interviews. I transcribed 34 of the 45 interviews, and a temporary assistant—who had no knowledge of, or connection with, the project—transcribed the remaining 11 interviews. If I had it to do over, I would choose to transcribe all the interviews myself. I found that transcribing the interviews gave me another opportunity to relive the interview and to recall my overall impression of what that participant felt about her/his place. I found every opportunity to interact with and recall the interview was worthwhile, and because the analysis of the transcripts followed several months after the initial interviews, this was a great refresher. Second, transcribing an oral discourse into textual format is really a process of re-writing, regardless of how meticulous of a transcriber you choose to be.

> Thus, to transcribe is necessarily to write, in the sense of rewrite. Like the transition from written to oral that occurs in the theatre, the transition from the oral to the written imposes, with the changes in medium, infidelities which are without a doubt the condition of a true fidelity (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 31).

Following from Kvale (1996), each interview can be seen as a creation of knowledge from those people present. Kvale looks at the knowledge constructed in an interview as knowledge that is being "constructed *inter* the *views* of the interviewer and the interviewee" (Kvale, 1996, p. 15). He sees a dual aspect to the interview, "an alternation between the knowers and the known, between the constructors of knowledge and knowledge constructed" (p. 15). Further,

> the research interview is not a conversation between equal partners, because the researcher defines and controls the situation. The topic of the interview is introduced by the researcher, who also critically follows up on the subject's answers…(Kvale, 1996, p. 6).

As a co-creator of the knowledge constructed in the interview, and as the person defining the topic and directing the course of these interviews, I am the person best situated to transfer the meaning found in the recorded interviews into textual format.

I chose not to include fragments of speech such as "you know" and "like" every time they were uttered, for the purpose of increasing textual flow. For research that deals with sensitive and emotional topics such as death and dying, or abuse, I would feel considerably more uneasy about omitting such 'language', but in my study I do not feel any 'significant' meaning was lost by this sort of omission and paraphrasing (where it occurs), as the purpose of this study was not a detailed narrative analysis. Further, parts of the interviews that I felt were digressions from the topic at hand were often paraphrased for the transcripts. I have marked in my transcripts all instances where I have paraphrased dialogue in case I should ever wish to draw from the interviews again for different topics, or in case something that seemed less relevant in the early stages of analysis should become more important in the later stages. Even segments of complex, but meaningful, dialogue may have been paraphrased on occasion, for clarity.

Bourdieu (1996) addresses this issue, which may be contentious for some. First, in regards to transcribing to preserve meaning:

> ...We have sometimes had to disembarrass the transcribed text of certain parasitic developments, certain confused phrases, verbal expletives or linguistic tics (the 'rights' and the 'ers', etc.), which, even if they give their particular colour to the oral discourse and fulfil an important function in communication (by permitting a statement to be sustained during a moment of breathlessness or when the interlocutor is called on to support a point), nevertheless have the effect of confusing and obscuring the transcription, in some cases to such a point that it is made altogether unreadable for anyone who has not heard the original (p. 31).

Many refer to the artificiality of 'the interview' describing it as a contrived, power-imbalanced interaction. However, I agree with Bourdieu: power and social distances can be lessened with a spirit of transformation on the part of the interviewer. Interviewing with an intention of *forgetting oneself* is both impossible, and surprisingly simple. Bourdieu says, "understanding and explaining are one" (1996, p. 23). By working to view the world from the perspective of my participants, during that hour or two when we were cloistered in communication, I was attempting and working at reaching understanding. Because I believe these attempts were successful, I also believe that my ability to explain is improved. Bourdieu argues:

> The sociologist may be able to impart to those interviewees who are furthest removed from her socially a feeling that they may legitimately be themselves, if she knows how to show them, both by her tone and, most especially, the content of her questions, that, without pretending to cancel the social distance which separates her from them (unlike the populist vision, which is blind to the reality of its own point of view), she is capable of *mentally putting herself in their place* (italics in original, p. 22).

Later, he adds:

> Thus, at the risk of shocking both the rigorous methodologist and the inspired hermeneutic scholar, I would willingly say that the interview can be considered a sort of spiritual exercise, aiming to obtain, through forgetfulness of self, a true transformation of the view we take of others in the ordinary circumstances of life (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 24).

Bringing It All Together

The final stages of analysis consisted of constantly revisiting the transcripts to finalize categories and coding. The major questions that I had brought into the project were still the major themes that interested me in the final stages of this project. In addition to these major themes—land management system, 'time spent' in the community, and physical factors—other topics emerged. The mountains and how they 'changed constantly' was a theme that was raised by so many participants, and in such similar language, that I could not help but contemplating its importance. For all themes that I pursued through the final stages of analysis, I scanned the transcripts for both supporting and contradictory evidence.

In the final stages of analysis, surrounded by large sheets of scribble that indicated my categories, definitions, and areas of interest, I began to draw out of the interviews the segments I wished to use in this dissertation. Many of the passages I have included stood out in my memory from the original interview. My notes from the time, and highlighting that I did during repeated visits to the transcripts, helped me to track down sections from interviews that I felt best represented the themes that arose from this project. After adding these quotes, I returned to the transcripts to search for excerpts that would contradict the meaning in the selected passages. When I found contradictions I noted negative cases, and alternative points of view, and in many cases I questioned my original interpretations of the data. I did not always include these sources of data.

The sample that I have collected for this project is not a random sample, and it is not meant to display statistical significance, so contradictory cases were not surprising and did not necessarily nullify my original observations, but simply added fullness to these observations. Even if only one respondent indicated a certain response that I took interest in, I felt this response was worthy of discussion. The fact that 44 other cases contradict this observation did not deter me, because in such a small sample size, all variation is important. I attempted to include as much variation as possible in my final discussions, while remaining within the confines of my topics of interest. Nonetheless, no major theme noted in this dissertation was supported by only one case.

Photographs

> Like our field notes and other forms of empirical data, photographs may not provide us with unbiased, objective documentation of the social world and material world, but they can show characteristic attributes of people, objects, and events that often elude even the most skilled wordsmiths. Through our use of photographs we can discover and demonstrate relationships that may be subtle or easily overlooked. We can communicate the feeling or suggest the emotion imparted by activities, environments, and interactions. And we can provide a degree of tangible detail, a sense of being there and a way of knowing that may not readily translate into other symbolic modes of communication. So, despite the irksome complexity of travelling through contested territory, the new knowledge yielded by the innovative methods we suggest makes the journey beneficial (Prosser and Schwartz, 1998, p. 116).

Participants took 587 photographs in this project, representing those things that most attach them to their place. This vast pool of visual information is unlike the data collected by the majority of visual anthropologists and sociologists to date, and were utilized in this study as a means of encouraging contemplation and verbalization among participants of their feelings about sense of place. The photographs were thus a focal point of the interviews.

Both visual anthropology and sociology have been under-appreciated and under-utilized, according to practitioners of these branches (Ball and Smith, 1992; Cronin, 1998; Harper, 1998; Prosser and Schwartz, 1998). However, visual representations have an immense potential for the social sciences. Photographs have the potential to document both information and emotion (Barthes, 1980; Cronin, 1998).

> Barthes (1980)…claimed that photographs could be divided into those which contained a 'studium' (informational and aesthetic value) and those which contained a 'punctum' (a shock, thrill or emotion elicited by the photograph). Barthes claims that the informational and aesthetic value of a photograph is available to anyone, i.e., a photograph is interpretable in a similar way by any two individuals who have access to the same cultural codes. The punctum, however, is specific to the individual (Cronin, 1998, p. 71).

Photographs have the ability to communicate issues, topics, and meanings that words may struggle to convey. What seems to be lacking with photographs, however, even more so than in other areas of qualitative research, is an accepted method for analysis. Harper (1998) encourages visual sociologists to approach research design and analysis within the traditional framework used by sociologists for more common research practices.

The approach used to address the visual component of this project is straightforward and simplistic. The initial incentive for incorporating the visual project into this research design came from a desire to encourage quality responses from participants, as well as to offer something that would be easily digested and understood by the non-sociologically minded members of the forestry agencies that provided funding. It was believed that being able to present photographs of places on the landscape that were of greater importance than others (to residents), would prove advantageous—and easier to understand and utilize—to foresters and forest managers. By superimposing these photographs of 'important places' onto topographical maps of the managed landscapes in the Jasper and Hinton area, managers would have a powerful tool for future management. The outlook, then, for the photographs in this project has rested primarily in the 'information' category of photograph types. From an academic point of view, however, these visual aids were employed as an effective method of representing abstract notions of place attachment and meaning in order to improve the interview data. Photographs just made the most sense.

Of all the photographic visual studies that I have been able to track down, there are only two that actually hand over the camera to the participants—as I do in this study. One is an anthropological filmmaking (study) approach to the Navajo, where the Navajo were briefly taught filming techniques in order that they could film what they thought was important for communication (Worth and Adair, 1972). The other study (Yamashita, 2002) more closely matches the methodology of this project, entailed giving cameras to children and adults, and asking them to portray their perceptions of a river through photography.

The vast majority of other visual sociological studies either consist of sociologists with an interest in photography, who go out photographing that which they find interest in; or, socio-psychological approaches, wherein subjects are asked to explain photographs (that they did not take). This project is unique—especially within sense of place literature—in that I ask respondents to take their own photographs in order to represent what their place means to them. It does not entail me taking photographs of what I think the place means (or what I think they think the place means), and then taking the photographs to them for validation or refute. This methodology removes one of the more contested aspects of most visual sociology:

> Becker reminded us that photographs, often thought of as 'truth', are more precisely reflections of the photographer's point of view, biases, and knowledge, or lack of knowledge (Harper, 1998, p. 29).

In most visual sociology and anthropology, where the researcher is the one representing 'truths' and theories through visuals that she has taken, there should be a great amount of concern about the validity of those 'truths' and theories—and there has been. Since the photographer's point of view, biases, and knowledge are unavoidable in the photographs they take, it may make sense to hand the camera over to the respondents, since it is their point of view, biases, and knowledge that is in question.

To restate, then, in this project, the photographs have been used primarily as a means for inspiring thought, improving response, and clarifying communication between respondents and me. I have not analyzed the visual data for this thesis, but have acknowledged their importance in contributing to the quality of the interview data, which are the data that results are drawn from. The photographs may also be useful for their informational documentation for forest managers who will be able to access these photographs from the website being constructed for the larger national project (beyond the scope of this thesis). Forest managers will be able to visually locate the areas within their Forest Management Agreements that are used most frequently and that residents refer to as most important for their sense of place.

Ethics

This research followed the University of New Brunswick, Faculty of Forestry and Environmental Management Ethics Committee guidelines. All participants were informed of the extent of project that they were volunteering for, and the website that would be posting their photographs. All respondents signed a consent form allowing us the right to display their visual responses and parts of their interview responses. If participants did not wish to share their responses publicly this was noted and these responses were kept confidential. If participants included other individuals in their photographs, such as family members or friends, I asked them to obtain written consent from these individuals allowing us to display these photographs publicly (beyond the scope of this thesis). For a detailed description of the Ethics review for this project please see Appendix C.

Chapter Five

FINDINGS

This qualitative research was founded on a number of research questions reiterated below based on my interaction with place literature and theory. While these research questions were integral to how I approached the methodology, interviews and analysis, it has been my intent from the conception to allow the participants to contribute to the direction of this process. While my research questions guided and structured the interviews, the participants themselves had the ability to redirect (at least temporarily) the course of the interviews or influence how the results would be weighted.

This section will present the data that speaks to the four primary research questions that have guided this research, and the Discussion will elaborate on issues and topics that went beyond, or stretched, the scope of my original questions, but which were indicated by respondents as being important for consideration.

Research Questions

There are four primary, or guiding, research questions that constitute this research. To reiterate, these are:

1. What are the underlying components that contribute to one's sense of place in Hinton and Jasper as communicated by the respondents themselves?
2. What meanings do respondents associate with these underlying components of place?
3. Do the different land management systems of Hinton and Jasper affect respondents' senses of place, and if so how?

4. Do the physical components of place manifest themselves only through social processes that attach meaning to the landscape, or do the physical qualities themselves also assert independent influence over how that place is defined?

The section Components of Sense of Place in Hinton and Jasper will address Question #1: What are the underlying components that contribute to one's sense of place in Hinton and Jasper? This section will explore how respondents in the two study communities discussed sense of place. The section Meanings of Respondents' Place Components deals specifically with Question #2: What meanings do respondents associate with these underlying components of place? This section will elaborate on the meanings respondents associated with their components of place. The Land Management and Sense of Place section will deal with Question #3: Do the different land management systems of Hinton and Jasper affect respondents' senses of place, and if so how? This section will speak to how the land management systems of Hinton and Jasper do play a significant role in respondents' senses of place.

The final section, Mountains, deals specifically with Question #4: Do the physical components of place manifest themselves only through the social processes that attach meaning to the landscape, or do the physical qualities themselves also assert influence over how that place is defined? This section exemplifies how qualitative research can be led to unexpected directions. Although the underlying question of this section—how do physical factors influence sense of place?—has been integral to this research from its conception, the topic or theme of mountains was an area that was not expected to be so rich in detail. Although my initial research questions contained little in the way of inquiry about the mountains specifically, the participants made it perfectly clear that this was a topic that must be discussed and considered. Before entering into the findings themselves, a brief overview of sample characteristics is included below.

Sample Characteristics

In total, 45 respondents contributed to this project, 22 in Hinton and 23 in Jasper (see Table 1 and Table 2).

The proportion of males to females in my sample differed slightly in each community, but approximate equal representation was achieved. Overall, between the two communities there were 22 female and 23 male participants sampled (see Table 1). In order to attain as representative a sample as possible, given the purposive sampling protocol, a wide range of ages, occupations, income levels, and levels of educational attainment was desired in the sample (see Table 2). In both communities, perspectives from all adult age groups were sought and these were all represented in my sample. Not only age was considered important, however, but also the length of time a respondent had spent in her/his community and whether she/he was born in that community or had come from away.

I tried to include in my sample those who were dependent on the extractive industries in Hinton, as well as those who were less dependent on these industries, such as those in the service industry, health care professionals, or government employees. Likewise, in Jasper I sought respondents from across the primary employers: Parks Canada, the Canadian National Railroad, and the tourism industry. The sample for both communities adequately reflects the diversity of occupation, age, length of residence, gender, and place of birth that was sought at the outset of this project. While Hinton was more of a mining town in the past, during the data collection for this research jobs related to mining had greatly decreased, and this is why only one respondent from the mining industry is included in my sample.

Table 1

Sample Characteristics, Hinton and Jasper, 2001

	Hinton (N=22)	Jasper (N=23)
Gender		
Female	9	13
Male	13	10
Age of Respondent		
18-24	0	2
25-34	5	4
35-44	10	8
45-54	3	5
55-64	2	1
65 and above	2	3
Respondent's Length of Residence in Community		
0-2 years	0	4
3-9 years	6	5
10-29 years	11	6
30 years and more	5	8
Born here	8	6
From away	14	17

Total (N=45)

The samples that were drawn from Hinton and Jasper provide a fair representation of the diversity of occupational groups in these two communities, even though the number of respondents in most categories is small. In other words, the significance of this sample is not that it represents the range of people in these communities, but that it is diverse enough across categories to allow me to group observations and suggest that certain components are important. Table 3 highlights general community profiles for both Hinton and Jasper from official Statistics Canada Community Profile information from the 2001 census. Statistics Canada information is used with the permission of Statistics Canada. Users are forbidden to copy the data and redisseminate them, in an original or modified form, for commercial purposes, without the expressed permission of Statistics Canada. Information on the availability of the wide range of data from Statistics Canada can be obtained from Statistics Canada's Regional Offices, its World Wide Web site at http://www.statcan.ca, and its toll-free access number 1-800-263-1136.

Table 2

Occupations of Respondents, Hinton and Jasper, 2001

Hinton (*N*=22)	
Occupations of Respondents	
Forestry and Mining	8*
City Employee	4
Small Business Owner	2
Service Industry	1
Health Care	1
Carpenter	1
Provincial Government	1
Teacher	1
Pastor	1
Retired	2
Jasper (*N*=23)	
Occupations of Respondents	
Parks Canada	8
Service Industry	5
Canadian National Railroad	3
Small Business Owner	2
Painter	1
Environmental Activist	1
City Employee	1
Retired	2
Total (*N*=45)	

*Only 1 respondent worked in the Mining Industry, the remaining 7 in the Forest Industry

Table 3

Statistics Canada Community Profile, Work, 2001[*]

	Hinton	**Jasper**
Occupation[**]		
Total Experienced Labour Force[***]	*5,365*	*2,975*
Management occupations	420	420
Business, finance and administration occupations	615	260
Natural and applied sciences and related occupations	290	85
Health occupations	200	75
Social science, education, government service and religion	255	85
Art, culture, recreation and sport	75	70
Sales and service occupations	1,570	1,385
Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations	1,275	470
Occupations unique to primary industry	335	80
Occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities	325	40

[*] Adapted from www.statcan.ca/start.html, see References for full citation, under Statistics Canada

[**] This is based on the 2001 National Occupational Classification for Statistics (2001 NOC-S)

[***] Refers to persons 15 years or older, exluding institutional residents, who were employed or unemployed during the week (Sunday to Saturday) prior to census day, and who had last worked for pay or in self-employment in either 2000 or 2001.

Components of Sense of Place in Hinton and Jasper

> What are the underlying components that contribute to one's sense of place in Hinton and Jasper, as communicated by the respondents themselves?

This section will elaborate on how respondents from Hinton and Jasper chose to discuss their senses of place. This section will detail those components of place that the respondents indicated as being integral to their place during the interview process. This section is meant to identify these elements of place, not to imply distribution or differential importance of the elements (although I have included numbers of respondents that indicated each element to increase clarity).

Each interviewee—regardless of the community I was in and the individual characteristics of the respondent—would take me through the same list of attachments found in all other interviews. By way of answering my first guiding research question, then, I will walk the reader through the list of components that these respondents shared with me while discussing their senses of place.

First, all respondents from Hinton and Jasper converged in their attachment and satisfaction with the recreational opportunities readily available to them; the quality and importance of the natural world surrounding them; and, the importance of personal relationships. These first three components were those that were spoken of for a greater amount of the interview than any other topic of place. These will be discussed in more detail below. As well as these primary three components of place, participants also indicated the importance of their homes—and many of these included descriptions of gardens—and the town's services and facilities. Respondents introduced the topic of infrastructure, service and facilities to appraise, criticize and/or commend the quality and extent of services in their community. Residents from both Hinton and Jasper were largely satisfied with the services and facilities in their communities, with the exception of shopping options and opportunities for advanced or continuing education, which were deemed insufficient in both communities. Despite all the differences between and within these two communities, the list of variables that went into their place attachment and satisfaction was the same. Every interview would touch on all of the above topics without fail.

This list that all respondents would walk me through is in most part the answer to the question, "What are the underlying components that contribute to one's sense of place in Hinton and Jasper?". However, it soon became apparent in both communities that a balance in this list of components was also crucial for certain respondents to have a satisfactory sense of place. I will discuss in greater detail below this component of balance.

The personal or social category referred to by respondents consisted of relationships with family and friends, or simply the 'sense of belonging' that the resident felt in the community. The 'physical' component referred to the quality of the 'bush', 'wilderness', 'wildlife', and mountains of the area. This level of attachment had less to do with activities that could be carried out in this physical landscape, and more to do with enjoyment of living in, or being surrounded by, such an environment. A number of respondents (21 of 45) of both towns also mentioned the importance of the physical location of their towns, specifically that they were located on a major highway. This easy connection to the outside world was important for many because finding other such high quality environments (as surrounds Hinton and Jasper) usually requires being far more isolated. Living in such a physically satisfying environment that was also physically connected to the rest of the world was important to these respondents.

The recreational component referred to by respondents had to do with the type and proximity of landscape that was available, and ideal, for camping, hiking, fishing, and other outdoor recreational activities. These categories of attachment are the components of place that were most commonly communicated to me by respondents.

I concluded each of the interviews with the question: "What is the most important thing to you about this place?" This interview question was an item on my interview guide that was used to address the question, "What are the underlying components that contribute to one's sense of place in Hinton and Jasper?". Those who found this question difficult usually managed to reply in a way that indicated that "everything" or a "combination of things" was important to them: that it was too hard to 'pull apart'. When these 14 respondents (of a possible 45) listed the components that constituted their "everything" they would describe a combination of the three components of place listed above: the social, the physical and the recreational.

> Well, again, I think it's probably the mixture of everything: the community, the people I know, the people I work with, the scenery and stuff around, and everything all rolled into one makes a pretty good package for me. (female, 14 year Hinton resident)

*

> The most important thing to me? Can it be people…can it be everything? Hmm. Probably recreational stuff, and [my life partner]. (female, 3 year Jasper resident)

There were two cases where the respondents only highlighted two components of place (not all three) that they felt were most important. One of these answered that her "job" and the "mountains" were most important to her; the other answered, "this is my home" and the "surroundings". Seventeen respondents answered this question without hesitation, and these would answer with either "family" or "community". Those who immediately indicated family or community seemed to hold this belief firmly and did not need much time to form an answer.

Eight respondents cited "physical surroundings" as the "most important thing" about their community—this was given with equal regularity in both Hinton and Jasper. "Job" was cited as the most important reason by only two respondents—one in each community—but economics were mentioned by some of the (six) respondents who answered that the most important thing about their place was that "it [was] their home". For these respondents, their home was amalgamated into one category that included the ability to work and support their families. Their answer may have specified only their home as important, but additional answers (and the interview as a whole) indicated that the respondents' work (or their spouses' work) that allowed them to maintain their home was wrapped up in this phrase.

Meanings of Respondents' Place Components

> What meanings do respondents associate with these underlying components of place?

This section deals specifically with Question #2 of the guiding research questions. The balance between personal relationships (the social), recreational opportunities, and physical environmental quality was important for residents of both Hinton and Jasper. However, respondents from these two places defined these three categories in different ways. While the overall concept may have been the same, the meanings within those concepts were often very different. First I will present the meanings of the social components of place for Hinton and Jasper respondents and then I will present the meanings of the physical landscape and suitable recreational activities for each place.

The Social

This section will discuss how the social components of place meant very different things to respondents from Hinton than it did for respondents from Jasper. Respondents from each community cited personal relationships as integral to their sense of place, but the type and nature of these relationships had some striking distinctions. Whereas in Hinton these relationships typically meant family relationships, in Jasper it more often referred to community relationships.

One's immediate family was commonly mentioned as a key attachment. For the residents that had been born and raised in their community the extended family was also mentioned as important—this included aunts, uncles, grandparents, etc. The impression I received from interviewees (of both communities) was that Hinton was more likely to have extended families that had remained in the town, while respondents from Jasper were more likely to have their family scattered elsewhere.

Regardless of the community, the presence of family in the town was cited as important to the respondent's place. There were many respondents (28) in both towns that indicated the importance of family. However, extended families were mentioned more often in Hinton (11) than in Jasper (3). Extended family was not only mentioned by those participants who had extended family in town, but also by participants who had come to Hinton from away. Five respondents mentioned that Hinton was not an easy town to be a newcomer in, because Hinton was made up of so many people who had been raised there, and who still had all their family there. The 'newcomers' cited these closed social networks as an obstacle to establishing close ties with people from Hinton because, although the 'locals' were very friendly, they were already so busy with their family that they did not need, or have time for, anybody else.

> The people in Hinton, their whole family lives here, and they've never gone away. And, that's great. I wish I could live with my family. I would love to be able to be in that situation where my grandparents and my grandchildren are in town, and all my brothers and sisters are there. They [those from Hinton] all have everything here, they don't need us [those from away]. I don't know if that is the way they feel or not, but they don't have time for anybody else. And that's good, because they are spending all of their time with their family. It is a family community. (female, 10 year Hinton resident)

This respondent was trying to not speak negatively about those residents who were from Hinton, but it was obviously something that she felt emotional about, and that caused her dissatisfaction. She clarified for me that the people were nice; it was just that they did not seem to have the time to spare, due to their closeness with their (often extended) family.

> They are friendly. People are very nice and friendly. As far as meeting people on the streets, that's fine. And, I have met a lot of people in my job. So, I know a lot of people on a casual basis, but no one close. But

> you still need close sometimes. So, we go back to visit our family a lot. That takes us away.

This respondent was not alone in describing Hinton as a very family-oriented community that was very tough to break into from the outside. I was led to understand that the residents of Hinton who were born and raised there were more likely to stick with their family group rather than not. Respondents described a town where family was very important, and the larger community was less important.

> I think overall the community is really friendly, and pretty helpful even...But, I also think that the town's pretty cliquey, and I think as a newcomer it can be a pretty tough town to become accepted in, for some.
>
> Me: *Why is that?*
>
> I think because it is an old town, and not a lot of people are coming in from different areas. I think most of the people who live here have pretty much been here a long time. And so I think people coming from Newfoundland, or British Columbia, or wherever, find it to be a little bit of a challenge to be accepted here. Why? Some people have closed minds. They want to live in their own little worlds or whatever. It is a family-based town, that's how we are. That's how my family is; we pretty much do everything together. (male in his 30s, born and raised in Hinton)

The above respondent was sensitive to how newcomers felt about the tight-knit family groups in Hinton because his wife was from away, and she had experienced how daunting it could be as a newcomer. Nonetheless, he openly admitted to conducting himself in a way that did make it hard for those from away to make close connections to long-time residents. Although he understood, and empathized with how this must feel to newcomers, he openly admitted that it was just the way his family worked.

I asked another Hinton participant that was new to town about his social networks, and he replied,

> Most of my friends here are work-related people that I work with. Some cases are outside of that, but not too many. So, it's kind of limited in a way. I went to high school in Edmonton, and university, so I still have a lot of friends who are there. But, there's enough time to see them on the weekend.

> *Do you find Hinton a tough town to be a newcomer in?*
>
> You don't meet a lot of locals. The locals here are very tight knit….It's not a very easy place to break into socially. All the people I know except for one are not from Hinton. (male, 4 year Hinton resident)

The meanings involved with the social component of place were different in Jasper. There was still a distinction between long-time residents and newcomers in Jasper, but the mechanism through which it worked was very different. In Hinton, newcomers were held at bay by the closeness of large, extended family groups, whereas in Jasper it was the 'community' of long-time residents that remained somewhat aloof. In Jasper, it was not large, extended family groups that were the obstacle, but rather a close community of long-time residents. Jasper was more about friendships, and Hinton was more about family. Again, it should be stressed that this does not mean that Jasper or Hinton residents were outright cold to newcomers, but simply that there was an adjustment period. As well, it is important to note at this point that these observations are drawn only from the interviews that I conducted. I am not attempting to generalize further than the information gathered through these respondents.

There were participants from Jasper who had strong family ties, although there were only two respondents—who turned out to be first cousins within the same family—that had a large, extended family still in Jasper. Instead, Jasper was repeatedly referred to as having a strong sense of community. Even among those residents that were born and raised in Jasper, and who still had brothers, sisters and/or parent(s) in town, the strength and the importance of the larger community was mentioned. This idea of community was mentioned far less often in Hinton.

One of my questions during the interviews probed for meanings of community by asking about each respondent's community. While the answers from Hinton were often favourable, the importance of the overall community seemed less important here. This was a combination of two things: respondents from Hinton put more emphasis in the overall interview on the importance of their family, as opposed to the importance of the 'community'; and, respondents from Jasper brought up the subject of community more often than those from Hinton. In Hinton, the most we would talk about 'community' would be during my question about community. In Jasper, community was brought up repeatedly, and was spoken of because the respondent wanted to speak of it, not because I was asking about it.

> I think it would just be the feeling I guess, just the sense of belonging, would be the most important thing [to me about living here]. (male, 3 year Jasper resident)
>
> *
>
> Me: *What would you say is most important to you about this place?*
>
> I think just the peacefulness of it all. I think that's the big one. And, another thing: I go downtown and I talk non-stop from Nutter's to the post office. My socializing is done all in one block, and we have such interesting characters. (female in her 30s, born and raised in Jasper)
>
> *
>
> If I go to a bar, or a meeting, or anything, I know people there. I'm not a total stranger....I like knowing people at the places where I go. You know, I can go to the post office and ask the guy behind the counter, "How's the wife, and my kid?!". You know! I can still joke with them. (male, in his 40s, born and raised in Jasper)
>
> *
>
> I like the community sense, because I grew up in a larger city, mainly Toronto, and I never had that community sense. I barely even knew my neighbours most of the time, whereas here you pretty much know everyone. You walk down the street and you are, like, "Hey Bob, hey Jill, hey Everybody"! You can't go to the bank without saying hi to at least 50 people. (female, 2.5 year Jasper resident)

Family was important in both communities, and 'community' was important in both communities. And, both family and community were an important aspect of respondents' personal relationships, which were critical to all interviewees' sense of place. However, family was mentioned more often in Hinton and community was mentioned more often in Jasper. While respondents from each community indicated that their personal relationships (the social component of their place) were integral to their sense of place, what these personal relationships meant between Hinton and Jasper respondents was very different.

> …You lose friendships. Friends that have gone. Like, physically, their proximity changes and stuff. But, you notice over time that your core friendships become more solid, and more easily defined, so that your sense of community is actually heightened. (male, 30 year Jasper resident)

*

> You get to know the people, they welcome you right away. Although it does take a while for them to really get to know you. Because at first they don't know for sure if you're going to stay, so they're not sure they should invest a lot of time. So, the longer you stay, the more they invest in you. They get to know you even more. Even with me now, I meet really great people, but then the fall comes and I never see them again. It's heartbreaking, because you really get to like somebody, but then they go away and you never see them again. Or, they come back next summer, and then leave again. After a while you start to get a little bit like, "Yeah, yeah, you're leaving," or, you see that they are staying and you say, "Okay, I'll talk to you more". (female, 9 year Jasper resident)

In Hinton, respondents made it clear that family was drawn on much more than community, and those who did not have family were more likely to struggle to find close relationships than those in Jasper.

> It's mainly a family-oriented community in Hinton. As an outsider it can be pretty tough to meet people and be incorporated into the community, because many people from Hinton are born and raised here and many have their whole families here. So, they are pretty tightly knit that way. For an outsider it can be pretty tough, at first anyway. (male, 15 year Hinton resident)

There were circles or groups of individuals from away that created their own smaller communities in Hinton, but this was different than the more inclusive community that could be available in Jasper to those newcomers that had shown their commitment to staying, and who had already invested some time in town. Personal relationships were important in both towns, but what these relationships meant, and the way these relationships evolved, functioned, and were discussed was very different.

> Mostly my community is from within my church, and some other people dealing with hunting or outdoor education and stuff like that. And that's about that. I don't really spend time with people from work. In fact, I keep my work and my private life very separate. It's just a thing I prefer, to keep it that way, that's all. And family is very important as well. My parents have moved into town. (male, 13 year Hinton resident)

The Physical and Recreational

The above section discusses how the meanings of the social component of place were very different between Hinton and Jasper respondents. This section will elaborate on how the meanings of the physical landscape and recreational opportunities in Hinton and Jasper were also very different according to respondents.

All residents from both Hinton and Jasper communicated to me the importance of the physical landscape and the recreational opportunities it provided to their attachment to, and satisfaction of, place. Although I expected Jasper respondents to indicate a greater attachment to the physical elements surrounding their place, this did not turn out to be the case. In fact, the physical landscape was mentioned more often in Hinton than it was in Jasper, although it was pivotal for residents of each community. And, while the physical and recreational were important for respondents of each community, it became readily apparent that the meanings of these differed considerably. The meaning of nature, and the appropriate ways of interacting with it, constituted the basis of disparity between the two towns.

It was very important for respondents from Jasper (20 out of 23 respondents mentioned this as important to them, of their own volition) that the mountains they lived in (Jasper National Park) harboured protected wilderness.

> I think I would miss the wilderness of these mountains, and the fact that when you're out there you can run into anything, a grizzly bear, a golden eagle… (female, 9 year Jasper resident)

*

> No, I love living in a national park, for what the national park stands for. I wish everyone would adhere to the philosophy of the national park, and respect the place where they are. Some people get down on the national park because the national park restricts them from doing things they want to do or from making money or whatever. But what they have to remember is that people don't come here to visit their business; people come here to visit the park. (male, 2 year Jasper resident)

*

> Everyday I am reminded of, and take advantage of, the fact that I am in a national park. (male, 32 year Jasper resident)

*

> Yeh, but it's also just because they look so amazing. We live in such a cool area, and we know that they can't just come and pave the area, and mow something down. You're in a protected area and hopefully it will always look beautiful like this. (female in her 20s, born and raised in Jasper)

Nearly all Jasper respondents indicated the importance of the protected status of the landscape they lived in. The protected wilderness, and the quality of it, was a great draw to the majority of residents that came from away. All of the respondents that were born and raised in Jasper also mentioned this. This response was far less common in Hinton, where only seven respondents out of 22 mentioned this as being important.

Respondents from the two towns overlapped in their areas of use at the mountains, and in placing a great deal of importance on the recreational opportunities that abound in their areas. Jasper respondents would seldom use the landscape on the Hinton side of the park, but residents from Hinton would use the mountains in the park, and other parts of the park as well. However, the protected status of the park, and the restrictions that were levied to protect the park, were spoken of in a very different manner between the two communities. A large part of this had to do with how residents perceived of nature, and the type of recreational activity they chose to engage in.

Thirteen respondents from Hinton indicated (without being asked) that the national park attracted too many people, and so there were crowding problems; and 12 respondents also felt the restrictions detracted from their experience of the environment.

> Oh we never, never camp [in the park]. Why would you camp there when you could go to Rock Lake? People think they're going to Jasper and seeing the most beautiful places in the world. They're beautiful, but they're so overcrowded. You can go to somewhere like Rock Lake and it's every bit as beautiful as anything you'll see in Jasper—and you can be there with maybe five or six other people, tops. (female, 9 year Hinton resident)
>
> *
>
> Me: *It seems like the places you chose to recreate in were outside of the national park?*
>
> Yes, they were outside.
>
> *Why is that?*
>
> Mainly because of the camping. The restrictions in the Park that you have to deal with, and the fact that you are side by side to other people in the camp spots. It wasn't our idea of getting away from it all. (male in his early 30s, born and raised in Hinton)
>
> *
>
> Me: *Why do you prefer to use the backroads around Hinton rather than Jasper National Park?*
>
> It's quieter, and you see more. Just to get away from the hustle and bustle. Jasper is pretty busy; it's a nice place, but the highway is busy on the way there. Here you can just go back-roading and see what you can see. (female, 14 year Hinton resident)

Jasper residents would immediately turn discussion of the park to indicate the positive—the protected wilderness—while still acknowledging the negatives—the crowding. Hinton respondents focused on the drawbacks of the park, and seldom mentioned that the protected status of the park was very important.

These differences come down to some fundamental differences in regards to how residents in these two communities viewed nature, and as a consequence, how they perceived and appraised appropriate interactions with nature. This proved to be a complex and rich area of discussion. There was neither complete agreement nor disagreement by residents from the two communities, but rather there were different ways of dealing with and attaching meaning to issues that were raised by both. These different meanings associated with nature and experience of nature will be discussed below in the Land Management and sense of Place section since it became apparent that the land management systems of these two places were playing a significant role in how respondents viewed nature and recreation in nature.

To reiterate, then, the components that respondents indicated to me as being integral to their sense of place were the physical, social, and recreational aspects of their place. All participants commented on the importance of these three components in their lives, although the meanings of what these constituted varied markedly between respondents in Hinton and Jasper. Certain respondents from both communities also stressed the importance of balance in their lives. This balance was desired between these three primary components of place. Other components of place that were mentioned by respondents were respondents' homes, and the infrastructure and services of the town. Although my expectations were confirmed by the importance stressed on the physical and recreational in both communities, I was incorrect in assuming that Jasper participants would indicate a greater attachment to the physical landscape due to the influence of the national park. On the contrary, Hinton respondents discussed the physical aspects of their place more often than did Jasper respondents.

Land Management and Sense of Place

> Do the different land management systems of Hinton and Jasper affect respondents' senses of place, and if so how?

This section will approach issues of landscape management and its effects on residents' senses of place. The data clearly indicate that the land management systems of Hinton and Jasper did affect respondents' senses of place, and this section will include an elaboration of how they did so.

The data indicate that the vast majority of respondents (39 of 45) preferred the land management system that they were surrounded by, and were less likely to utilize neighbouring landscapes that followed a different management system (the exceptions are presented below). The land management type that was supported in each of these two regions influenced how these respondents evaluated landscapes, and therefore affected how satisfied and attached these participants were to different areas surrounding their towns.

Respondents' use patterns on the landscape consistently matched the infrastructure of each respective land management area. Further, the conception of nature (and how humans should interact with nature) that was supported by the two land management areas—preservationist/biocentric in Jasper and utilitarian/anthropocentric in Hinton—also closely matched the conceptions of nature that respondents displayed in each respective community, regardless of occupation, level of educational attainment, and gender.

Respondents from Hinton were far less likely to use the landscape in the national park than they were to use the landscape that surrounded their own town. And, residents from Jasper almost never used the landscape surrounding Hinton. The reasons respondents would give for choosing to recreate in their area, and not the area governed by the other land management system, all concerned issues that were attributable to the management of the other system. In other words, respondents justified their area and its management by critiquing the other area and its management. The type of land management system of each area, then, was clearly a significant element of these respondents' senses of place.

I will first discuss the use patterns of these respondents and then present their rationale for using the landscape in the way that they do.

Use Patterns

The data state very clearly what landscapes residents used, and include respondents' rationale for doing so. Residents from Jasper (the preservationist land management type) viewed nature as 'high quality' when it exhibited the least outward evidence of human impacts. Residents from Hinton (the utilitarian, or industrial, landscape) viewed nature as 'high quality' when there were fewer humans themselves, as well as fewer rules and regulations, and when they were surrounded by 'bush'. This translated into different use patterns that were deemed appropriate by each group.

Participants from Jasper preferred activities that adhered to their view of nature (untouched), such as hiking, skiing, and other non-motorized activities. Participants from Hinton did not mind evidence of human presence as long as they felt there were few people in the landscape and a lot of bush around them. This meant that trucks, campers, and other motorized vehicles were appropriate means of reaching the more remote corners of their landscape. These findings are consistent with my initial expectations. In both cases, what participants conceived of as high quality nature matched their recreational and landscape choices.

> For example, I like to hunt, and in the mountains you are kind of restricted in some ways, whereas in the foothills you have access to so many more areas. In the mountains if you want to go hunt or fish for certain things, in certain areas, it may take you a long time to get there—a full day, or a full week to access certain spots. Here in the foothills it is just a matter of jumping in the truck and you can be there in no time, and then go and do your activity with ease of access. (male, 15 year Hinton resident)

*

> Me: *Do you find your places of peace and calm high up on a mountaintop, or does it have to be down by the water?*
>
> It doesn't matter, it doesn't have to be near water as long as it's in a natural area. As long as I'm surrounded by trees, not a gravel pit, not beside the highway, I'll be okay. (male in his 40s, born and raised in Jasper)

Jasper respondents rarely used landscapes that were outside of the national park. The majority of Jasper respondents I spoke with (21 of 23) did not use the landscape that immediately surrounded the park—especially on the Hinton side of the park. Hinton respondents, however, were far more likely to use a diversity of landscapes, inside and outside of the park.

> For me it is ideal here [in Hinton]. I stay away from the park in the summertime because of all the tourists. I go in the spring and fall to Jasper. In the summertime I spend most of my time in the foothills.
>
> Me: *So you get the best of both worlds?*
>
> Yes. When I go camping here, I can camp wherever I want, but not so in the park. In the park I have to stay in the campgrounds. I think it's beautiful out here because I can go wherever I want, I can take the dogs. I usually clean up after some of the other people who use the area. I enjoy every minute of it. I went to one spot 11 times last year and only saw four people, but I saw seven bears and 15 wolves!
>
> *Do you prefer the foothills then?*
>
> I like them both. I like the mountains better for hiking, like Roche Miette. I hike some other trails too, I have books for the trails in the national park. (male, 20 year Hinton resident)

*

> We go to Jasper. That is another good thing about living here, because we are close to the park. Hinton is a good location for us because we like camping, fishing and quadding, and we can do that sort of thing here, but then we're still close to Jasper. (female in her 40s, born and raised in Hinton)

The interviews, nonetheless, showed that residents of Hinton used the area immediately surrounding Hinton more often than they used the national park. This was explained as a function of proximity, convenience and quality of experience. For Hinton residents, high quality landscapes were available to them within minutes from their front door. It was only a 10-15 minute drive for these residents to be at a lake that was surrounded by "wilderness" where they could camp and recreate however they pleased. Driving to Jasper would take these residents at least 45 minutes, and they could expect to be in a crowded campsite, and they would be subject to many more regulations about what sort of activities they could conduct.

Hinton participants most commonly indicated that they used the industrial landscape surrounding Hinton for their outdoor recreational opportunities, and all respondents indicated that they used the area regularly. Again, although I had expected the physical environment to be less important to Hinton respondents than Jasper respondents due to the less dramatic nature of the landscape immediately surrounding Hinton, the industrial activity present on the landscape surrounding Hinton, and the social structures at work in Jasper that promote the importance of the physical environment, this did not turn out to be the case. Hinton respondents indicated a strong attachment to the physical environment, and in fact, spoke of the physical environment slightly more often than did respondents from Jasper.

Thirteen Hinton respondents indicated use of Jasper National Park for: the townsite—taking advantage of restaurants and other facilities; hiking trails and other outdoor activities; and for driving through to other locations—such as Calgary or the west coast. The seven Hinton respondents that indicated regular use of Jasper still used Hinton's industrial landscape more frequently than the Jasper landscape. The Hinton participants seldom used the national park for camping, and always used the foothills region more than park areas. A common way of explaining these patterns of use by

Hinton participants was for them to ask me: "Why would we drive the hour to Jasper, through all that traffic, when we have everything we need right here, only 15 minutes away?" The fact that it was more expensive to use Jasper was also indicated as a deterrent.

> We used to camp in the park when the kids were small, but you have to get your firewood in a certain pile, and only so much. Here, there is nobody. There, you have to get there early enough to pick a number. Again, you are probably better to stay at home, because you have more space there. When you camp [in Jasper] you're surrounded by all the dogs and with the parties, whereas here you can go anywhere, and it's quiet. We're going to Rock Lake tomorrow and I'm sure we'll be the only ones there for miles. (female, 20 year Hinton resident)

*

> I don't cherish camping in the park.
>
> Me: *Why's that?*
>
> [long pause]...Lack of freedom, to do...whatever. Fishing, whatever. I don't know, what's the best way of putting it? Camping in the park is too civilized?! I hate the thought of paying to park and set up the tent. (male, 13 year Hinton resident)

*

> Me: *How often do you use Jasper, the park?*
>
> When we first moved here we went there quite often. The longer we live here, the less we go there.
>
> *And why is that?*
>
> The crowds. (female, 9 year Hinton resident)

*

> That's the third time in three months that we've gone to Mountain Park [in the landscape surrounding Hinton], and it's a long drive over a rickety road, but we go and we take our European guests out there. We take them just to show them that there is more here than Jasper National Park, not that there's anything wrong with the national park. I always tell people to spend 3-4 days in Jasper, but if they are staying longer we take them out here, on a trip like this.
>
> Me: *Why?*

> I like it. I don't know why. It's always different and there is always a chance to see animals out there. And, you can always stop out there and have a picnic and no one is going to come and tell you that you owe them for this and for that. When we were there some people were leaving and they brought us over a bunch of firewood, that's the sort of thing that makes this place nice. (female, 10 year Hinton resident)

*

> This is not a designated campsite, it's just out in the bush, on the side of the road. You sleep better when you're out camping. You can be loud, you don't have to pay: that's another advantage about out here as opposed to the national park. If you go to a designated campsite you have to pay, and what do you get? You can't be loud, you can't quad. Here you can stay up to 4 AM if that is what you want to do….Also, here you can have everybody in one campsite, the whole family, whereas in a designated campground we would probably have to split up. This is just like the old wagon days! (male in his 30s, born and raised in Hinton)

The regulations in the park; paying for campsites and being restricted to designated campsites; as well as the crowdedness of campgrounds, all detracted from a sense of wilderness and freedom for the Hinton participants. Hinton respondents reported strong feelings about experiencing the high quality landscape and 'wilderness' that they were surrounded by, but they often held that the park lacked much of the wilderness, solitude, peace and freedom that they were searching for.

There were contradictory cases, however. There were three Hinton residents that indicated that they felt the landscape surrounding Hinton had been compromised by the industrial, extractive activities that occurred there. One of these participants was employed in the forest industry and commented that she worked in logged areas enough; when she recreated she preferred to be in more 'pristine' areas, and so she used the park for recreation more than she used the foothills.

> It's just a nice little island there without any logging. Not that I'm anti-logging, but recreationally I'd rather not go where it's been logged because I spend a lot of time already around logging. It's not that pretty really….What I like about Jasper National Park is that it is untouched, unspoiled. They don't have roads, they aren't logged; they are just really natural. (female, 21 year Hinton resident)

Another Hinton participant used the national park and Switzer Provincial Park (just outside of Hinton), because she felt that the area surrounding Hinton had been compromised by so much industrial activity. She did not use the industrial landscape outside of these protected areas very often. However, this was not solely because of resource extraction but also because she preferred water activities such as swimming and cliff jumping, and these activities were not possible in any of the areas outside of these parks simply because of topography.

> We like to go cliff jumping, or swimming, and there are not a lot of places to do that around [Hinton]. In Jasper, it is unlimited as to the places to go for that kind of thing. There are some hikes around here, but they're not that difficult. I like to do a variety of things, and Jasper offers more of that variety. (female, 8 year Hinton resident)

A third Hinton resident who was dissatisfied with the amount of industrial activity in the area surrounding Hinton did not have a problem with resource extraction per se, but rather the rate of extraction. This respondent still used the industrial landscape more than the park, however, because she felt the national park was too crowded and structured. There were seven other Hinton respondents who used the park on a regular (or seasonal) basis, but this had more to do with specialized recreational activities that required the mountains, such as mountain climbing, hiking and skiing, as opposed to any real dissatisfaction with how the land was managed around Hinton.

It was common for Hinton participants to indicate openness to using Jasper National Park for certain activities, rather than not. Some residents used the national park and the foothills area regularly, while others used the foothills area extensively and the park only rarely—but even these indicated an openness to the possibility of using the park. There was only one respondent (out of 22) who indicated that the only time he ever used the park was to drive through it. Hinton participants, then, were open to a wide variety of landscapes; they had a more inclusive definition of environments that were deemed worthy of use.

Jasper residents had a far narrower definition of a 'high quality' environment. Only two of 23 residents I spoke with from Jasper used the foothills landscape on the eastern boundary of the park (the Hinton area), and both of these residents were born in the foothills area—although closer to Edson than to Hinton. All other Jasper participants indicated that they did not use the foothills landscape on the eastern boundary of the national park. Five Jasper participants did mention the importance of the non-national park landscape on the western boundary of the park for berry picking in the late summer and early autumn—an activity that is not allowed in the national park. However, with the exception of berry picking outside of the national park, only five other Jasper respondents indicated any use of the non-preservationist landscape that surrounded them.

Jasper residents responded very differently than Hinton residents when discussing the landscape in the park and outside of the park. One of the most common complaints by Hinton participants about using the park was that it was too crowded and too busy. All Jasper participants also mentioned how busy the park was in the summer months, but they also indicated that this did not detract from their experience of the park. Jasper respondents explained that they could walk for five minutes in any direction from a busy trailhead or parking lot and be in complete solitude. Jasper respondents argued that the majority of tourists who bombarded the park in the summer rarely ventured outside of their cars, or from areas with easily accessible facilities. This was fine with all of the Jasper participants because all Jasper participants were (or had been) hikers, and they were happy to walk away from the commotion.

> I tell you, even right now, when the park is completely full—all the campgrounds are full, all the motels are full—even now in the middle of August, I could drive for 10 minutes, get out and walk for five minutes, and I could have you places where there are absolutely no people. There's nobody there, and it's a nice secluded spot. There is a nice

> stream running through it, a nice little lakeside edge, or whatever it is, and you would never know that there are a million visitors in the park right now; you don't know that this place is full. (male, 26 year Jasper resident)

As stated above, participants of both communities indicated strong preference for, and high rates of use of, the landscape that was closest to them. This comes down to a difference in recreation preference: most Hinton participants (18 of 22 respondents) were interested in 'camp site' camping—and often in non-designated campsites that they could still drive to—while all Jasper residents were more interested in backcountry hiking and/or skiing trips. This difference in recreation preference was a key factor in influencing how these participants perceived the quality of experience that could be had across different landscapes.

> Me: *Where do you guys usually do your holidaying? Do you often leave the park or stay in the park?*
>
> No, usually we just hang around here. We go camping to Horseshoe Lake, sometimes we go east to visit the in-laws in Guelph. But this is pretty well where we play; where we play and stay. (male, 27 year Jasper resident)

*

> I would pretty much have to be somewhere in the foothills, bordering the mountains. We're both pretty active in the sports that we choose and those sports are often best done right in the foothills....Yes, I like the foothills better. They are just a little bit more open so you can do more in them, and the thing is, you are so close to the mountains that you can use them if you want to. (male, 15 year Hinton resident)

There were two participants that were raised in the foothills, each of whom had lived in Jasper for over 20 years. These were the only two respondents from Jasper that indicated use in the foothills region. It was obvious that the relationship with the outdoors that they were familiar with from their upbringing was still important to them.

However, both of these respondents now used Jasper's landscape more frequently, and in the manner typical of Jasper residents.

The participants from this study show that the use patterns they had become most familiar with affected how they appraised other landscapes they came in contact with. Jasper participants would not use Hinton's landscape because that landscape was riddled with roads and cutblocks, and did not provide the same caliber of hiking as they could access in the park. Hinton participants were less satisfied with camping in the park because the campsites that were accessible by vehicle were not of the same caliber—of peace, quietness, and 'wilderness'—as could be accessed in the foothills. Further, residents of these two communities had higher tolerances for the 'negatives' of their own landscape, as long as these did not occur where the residents recreated.

Jasper residents were not overly concerned about the large numbers of visitors in the park because these residents knew how to get away from them—out of sight, out of mind. Even though the park may have been crawling with visitors, Jasper residents could 'feel' that they were in a vast wilderness, beyond the reach of civilization. Likewise, Hinton residents were not overly concerned about the cutblocks, mines and industrial use that occurred in the foothills, because they knew how to get away from them—out of sight, out of mind. Even though the foothills were actively managed, and roads and cutlines criss-crossed the landscape, Hinton residents could 'feel' that they were in a vast wilderness, beyond the worries of civilization. Both groups were able to accommodate their perceptions of nature to fit the type of recreation they were most familiar with. It was harder for them to enjoy landscapes that they had not created tolerances for, or that required a different form of recreation in order to utilize.

The land management systems of Hinton and Jasper influenced the means that residents would take in order to use these landscapes, and this then influenced how residents judged landscape quality. Moreover, this relationship was dialectical. Ideas of how nature should look, and what it was for, or should be, affected how nature could be used. A participant who thought nature should look continuously unbroken—or unmarred by human impact—felt that hiking was an appropriate activity because it left a small footprint, unlike roads. But, how nature was used also affected the types of landscapes that would be deemed of 'high quality'. 'Campsite' camping in the national parks brought users into heavily populated areas, and this indicated a lack of wilderness, and therefore a lower quality experience. One's conception of nature influenced how she recreated, but how she recreated also influenced how she perceived the quality of 'natural' areas.

The type of recreation supported by the infrastructure of each land management area matched very closely the preferred means of recreation by residents from these areas—the data show this time and again. Further, the conception of nature (and how humans should interact with nature) that was supported by the two land management areas—preservationist/biocentric in Jasper and utilitarian/anthropocentric in Hinton—also closely matched the conceptions of nature that residents displayed in each respective community, regardless of occupation, level of educational attainment, and gender. The type of land management that dominated in these areas, then, was an important contributing factor in these participants' senses of place.

Mountains

> Do the physical components of place manifest themselves only through social processes that attach meaning to the landscape, or do the physical qualities themselves also assert independent influence over how that place is defined?

This section will present the importance of the physical factors of place that participants communicated to me. The data indicate that the physical landscape was not only important due to the social conceptions embedded within the landscape, but also for the physical landscape itself. I will use the example of mountains to answer this research question since the respondents made it clear that the mountains were the most important physical component of their place. The findings show that the mountains were important for a number of reasons, some of which had to do with the social processes that attach meaning to the landscape, and some of which had to do with the physical qualities of the mountains themselves.

The mountains played an important role in the sense of place of all residents I interviewed in Jasper and Hinton. At some point in every interview the conversation would turn to the importance of the mountains and how the mountains affected the life of the respondent. Initially, I did not have any questions specifically designed in regards to the mountains. Instead, I had general questions about landscape, and these were attempts to understand the meanings held by respondents in regards to their 'landscape' overall. Even though the mountains are a dominant feature of this landscape, I wished to leave discussion open, to be directed by the respondents, and so I chose to discuss the landscape in general terms. In the beginning, then, there were no specific questions about the mountains and what they meant to residents, but this quickly changed.

From the first interview I conducted, the mountains immediately emerged as playing a very important role in a resident's place attachment. I asked the first person interviewed if she suspected when she first came to Hinton that she would still be here after all these years. She replied:

> No, I never knew that I was going to stay. But we really liked the mountains. The main reason that we're out here is because of the surroundings. For the outdoor activity, and the bush, and this space that you have. (female, 9 year Hinton resident)

This response, and introduction of the topic of mountains into the interview, happened within the first 5 minutes of the interview. From the very beginning, then, 'mountains' seemed an important topic.

In the next few interviews that followed, I received more comments about the mountains, in a general way. I was getting the message that the mountains were important, but the reason why they were important was not as obvious. In the third interview I conducted, I asked the participant why she submitted a picture of the mountains, and she responded:

> What I like about here is the mountains. I like the mountains. I like waking up every morning and seeing the mountains. (female, 12 year Hinton resident)

But I was starting to wonder why 'seeing the mountains' every morning was important, and it was in this interview that I first started asking directly about why the mountains were so important.

> Me: *Sometimes I wonder what it is about the mountains that does it for people? Any idea what?*
>
> I don't know. I know that [a person] downstairs wonders the same thing. Something to look at, nice sunsets. Makes all the weather go over top and land in Edson. It's been pretty hot out here the last couple of weeks.
>
> *So the mountains are still a mystery. I like them too but I'm just wondering what it is.*
>
> Well, they change all the time, different lighting. Who knows?

This was the first instance where I received this answer: that they 'change all the time'. This answer would soon come to be the most common response that I would receive from participants to my question of 'what makes the mountains so special?'. While this participant was the first interview in which I made a point of probing deeper behind the mountain phenomenon, I was still slow in making it a standard question, or line of questioning. However, within a very short period—by the seventh interview—I was questioning every participant directly about why the mountains were so special.

I received many answers to this question that I have distilled down into five categories. The mountains were important to participants in Jasper and Hinton because: 1) they provide security and a continuing presence; 2) they provide recreational opportunities; 3) they harbour protected wilderness; 4) they are world-renowned; and 5) 'they always change'. As mentioned above, while this section will elaborate on the findings that emerged in regards to the mountains, these findings speak directly to my fourth guiding research question since the mountains were the dominant feature of respondents' physical place.

Security and Presence

The constant presence of the mountains was often referred to with fondness. Out of the 17 respondents who cited this as an important role of the mountains, 16 were long-time residents or had a long history of living in mountainous areas. Length of time spent in place will be discussed below, but for now I want to focus on the role of the mountains, and why this presence was deemed important.

> It gives me a sense of security having the mountains around me like this. Some people would feel closed in, but for me it gives me a sense of security that they are always there. They are ever changing in appearance, but they're still there. Barring an earthquake, they'll always be there. That gives me a sense of permanence. That permanence may be important because of the fact that I moved every three years while growing up. I don't know, but it does give me a good feeling (female, 22 year Jasper resident).

*

> I would miss these. I would miss driving out of my crescent, when I always look up at the mountains. And driving home they are always there. I would miss that, so I'm glad they're there (female in her 40s, born and raised in Hinton).

This (everyday) awareness of the mountains, and the certainty that they would continue to be a presence in their lives was important for these respondents. As well, according to my respondents, the longer one spends in proximity to the mountains the more important their presence becomes, and the more noticeable their absence (when away from the mountains):

> It's the presence. You feel it after you've been here for a while. And, when you go to Winnipeg, or Edmonton, or anyplace without mountains, you feel naked. It's really hard on the eyes for a while, you really notice it. There is something very comforting here by having the mountains always there. Something on the horizon. You don't notice it when you first come here, but after you've been here for a while and then go somewhere without mountains you really notice that the mountains are gone. It's almost hard on the eyes, being able to see forever. It's really weird. It's in books as well, the people who live in the mountains, it's really hard for them to get away from them. It's kind of like the ocean, from the smells and its presence. I think it's kind of like that with the mountains too, you miss its presence (female, 9 year Jasper resident).

*

> I think when I first moved here, and we used to do a lot of driving around, I really didn't think it was that beautiful. The longer I live here, the more beautiful I think it is. It definitely gets into your blood.
>
> Me: *So are you going to miss the mountains themselves?*
>
> Yes.
>
> *What would you miss about them? What is it about them?*
>
> The sun coming up in the morning, especially if there's a little bit of snow on them and you just get that nice pink hue in the mornings. That's one thing about the condo is, we have a fabulous view right out our living room window. I can look out and see the mountains from my window. I would miss that. You get used to them there, walking to work or driving to work. And there's not a day goes by that you don't look at them and appreciate them (female, 9 year Hinton resident).

For these residents the mountains become important because they are such constant companions. For the several residents who have spent either their entire life or the vast majority of their lives in these mountains, they speak of riding bikes as kids, playing in the playground, growing up, dealing with adversity—and through it all 'the mountains are always there'. All the respondents who cite security and presence as an important reason for the mountains speak of how no matter what they are doing in their 'everyday lives' they are constantly aware of the mountains, and for these residents, the thought of moving away from the mountains seems unbearable. The mountains for these residents have become more than just beautiful, or massive and awesome; they have become companions.

> Me: *What would you say is the most important thing to you about this place?*
>
> The mountains. That's the most important thing: the mountains.
>
> *What is it about the mountains?*
>
> [Long pause] I don't know what it is about the mountains. It's not that I always like them; sometimes I don't like them. What is it about the mountains? It's hard. It's like asking me what it is that I love about my mother. I don't know what it is. I don't always like her, but I just love her. I couldn't imagine living without her. It's family. It's like a relative. It's a living entity; it's not an object (female, 21 year Jasper resident).

Recreational Opportunities

For residents of both Jasper and Hinton the recreational opportunities that the mountains provide were commonly referred to as an important role of the mountains. In fact, out of all 45 interviews conducted between both Hinton and Jasper, there was no resident that did not make reference to the quality of recreation that was available (in part) because of the mountains.

For residents of Hinton, which is located in the foothills—in view of, but not right within the mountains—some forms of recreation discussed did not require the mountains directly, but even these forms of recreation were improved by the backdrop that the mountains provided. Canoeing, hiking or mountain-biking in the foothills are examples of activities that did not require the mountains, but that residents indicated were improved by the scenery the mountains provided. As well, even if the activity did not necessarily require the mountains, the mountains may have improved the quality of the activity. A good example of this is hunting and/or wildlife viewing in the foothills. All participants in Hinton commented on either one or both of these activities and how the mountains improved the quality of each because of the diversity and quantity of large game animals that (seasonally) share habitat between the Rocky Mountains and the foothills.

The importance of mountains and recreational opportunities is both a function of the close proximity of the mountains for recreation and of the physical characteristics of the mountains themselves, which provides the substrate for the outdoor activities.

> Me: *What is it about the mountains that make them satisfying or makes them special?*
>
> Partly because of my occupation and all of the activities I do are kind of centered around the mountains. I've spent most of my life in the mountain environment....Even if I'm just driving down the highway and looking up and going, "Ah, cool! It would be neat to go up there. I wonder if there's a route up this peak" or "I should go check out this little valley, probably some cool waterfalls in there"....I just like the feeling of being in the mountains, and just the potential of things you can do here (male, 3 year Jasper resident).

*

> If there was one reason why I am here, it is because in two hours I can be there [in the high alpine]. I can take the kids and throw some sandwiches together and jump in the car at 8 AM, and by 9 AM be at the trailhead, and by 10:30 AM I can be up there. I can be right up there where the eagles fly (male in his late 40s, born and raised in Jasper).

*

> I would miss the mountains, although if we moved to British Columbia they have mountains there as well. What I like about here is the accessibility, the nearness, of the mountains. I would have to go farther if I lived in British Columbia to gain access to them from my home (female, 9 year Jasper resident).

They harbour protected wilderness

The mountains that surround Jasper and Hinton are strongly associated with 'protected wilderness' because of the national park. All of the mountains that border the Hinton townsite are within the protected area of the Jasper National Park. In fact, the boundary of Jasper National Park starts at the range of mountains that Hintonites can see from their homes. The mountains represent protected status, then, for those from Hinton. While hunting, quadding, camping in undesignated areas, and other such activities are allowed in the foothills region, once in the mountains restrictions apply due to their protected status.

The town of Jasper, however, is closer than Hinton to mountainous areas that are outside of protected area boundaries. Residents in Jasper need only drive for 20-30 minutes to be outside of the national park and into other land management areas. While the nearest alternative land management area to the Jasper townsite is a provincial park, this can be quickly by-passed and mountainous areas that allow industrial resource extraction lay immediately beyond. However, all of the Jasper residents I interviewed were extremely aware of, and appreciative of, the protected status of 'their' mountains.

For participants from both Hinton and Jasper, then, the mountains were represented as a protected wilderness area. Participants indicated that it was important that the mountains were a protected area, and that such an area was in close proximity. This response was not equally common in each community, however. The protected status of the mountains was only indicated as important by seven interviewees from Hinton (out of 22), whereas it was a more common response from Jasper residents. Out of 23 participants interviewed from Jasper, 20 people indicated that the protected status of the mountains was important. Note, however, that I did not question residents directly about whether or not the protected status of the mountains was important to them. If I had done so the numbers may have been higher for both communities. These numbers here are simply to indicate how many residents in each community mentioned this of their own volition, when asked about the importance of the mountains to their lives.

They are world-renowned

The Rocky Mountains of Jasper National Park attract over one million visitors per year (Parks Canada, 2000). Participants from both communities commented on the influence tourists had on their perception of the mountains. Participants enjoyed the international attention because 1) it provided a constant reminder that their home was special; 2) there was a measure of celebrity that goes with being a resident of such a place; and 3) for the pleasure of being able to meet such a diversity of people, without leaving their home (community).

> It's a world-class view. Every year at some point I run into people who have spent thousands of dollars to take a picture of that (male, 9 year Hinton resident).

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> This is a picture of our house, and it has actually become a big part of our being here. We run a Bed and Breakfast out of it….It's been a really enriching opportunity to be able to meet these people from all over the world. Yeh, just to see Jasper through their eyes is really interesting (male, early 40s, born and raised in Jasper).

*

> It's good that the boys are close to see this sort of thing. You talk to the tourists—every time you are up doing the tourist things—you talk to a lot of people about where they are from, and you realize: we're only fifty miles away! We're really lucky to be living so close to this. We try to take it in as much as we can (female, early 40s, born and raised in Hinton).

*

> Every time I play golf with somebody who is not from around here, when they stand on this tee box they just go, "Ooooo, ahhhh". That's all you can say. I mean, Pyramid Mountain in the background, ok? Victoria Cross range to the left. They just look at you and say, "You're pretty lucky to be playing golf here, or living here, period".

> Me: *So does that fill you with pride?*
>
> Yeah. Like when I play with people like this guy from Connecticut. You know, sometimes it's people like that who wake you up and say, "Look where you live!". I almost like to coax them on, encourage them anyway, to give me more "Ooo's and ahhh's". It can maybe make me look a little harder too, sometimes (male, 27 year Jasper resident).

The mountains, and the wildlife they harbour, are the primary draw for tourists, many of which come from around the world to see this area (Parks Canada, 2000). The world-class caliber of their landscape was not something that was lost on participants. The fact that other people are willing to go far out of their way to visit their home was cited as a constant reminder for participants about 'how lucky they are to be living there'. In this respect, the mountains become important because the world deems them important.

Further, there is a level of celebrity or status that is associated with living in such a world-renowned area. People from away consistently respond with disbelief that someone would be lucky enough to live there. In some cases, residents compare outsiders' reactions to them as what one would expect from someone meeting a celebrity. This sort of treatment must play a role in improving a person's perception of the quality of their home environment.

> I worked at the town center last year and I worked at the Icefields this year. It's just a unique thing to talk to people all the time from all over the world. They think it's funny that they are talking to you: they say, "So people actually live here?!". And when I say, "Yeh, I grew up here" they are like, "Really!?". It's like they've met a famous person or something! (female, early 20s, born and raised in Jasper)

Participants also appreciated the opportunity the mountains provide for meeting people from around the world. Residents from both Hinton and Jasper commented on the pleasure of being able to meet such a diversity of people.

> I'll sit out front and people will stop and talk, and I just find that very interesting. You go downtown and you hear French and German, and that's an aspect of the park that I like. Through hiking—and I would

> hike a lot up until a few years ago—you meet people on the trail, and most people have a story to tell. People will tell you where they are from; people are always happy to tell you where they are from. (female, early 70s, born and raised in Jasper)

They are always changing

By far the most common, and unexpected, answer that I received in response to my questions about the mountains was that 'they change all the time' or that 'everyday they are different'. This answer became so common and was stated in such similar language by the majority of respondents—from both Hinton and Jasper—that I could not help but acknowledge and contemplate its significance. In fact, respondents often used these two phrases identically in response to my questions.

> Everyday the mountains are different. It doesn't matter when you look at them. Everyday I come out of my driveway and look that way and see the mountains and they are different every day. I can't seem to get a good picture of them from down here for some reason....When I go to a restaurant I ask to sit by a window where I can see them, because that is just how much they change, constantly. (female in her 40s, 10 year Hinton resident)

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> Well for me anyway, it's the scenery. I've often commented that they [the mountains] change all the time. I can go into the mountains and every time I go they will be different in some way. Whether it's the lights, or the actual landscape, or something, they are always changing. That's what draws me I guess. (male in his 30s, 15 year resident of Hinton)

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> I don't know. Whether it's...I find beauty in any kind of landscape, but the mountains: it's just something special. They're hard, yet...I don't know...they're always changing. I think that's a big thing. You can look at them from 15-20 miles away from them. I can watch them riding on the way to work in the morning with the sun rising and they are constantly changing. You can see this whole huge mountain and it's constantly changing. From one day to the next. It's a wonderful piece of creation, really. (male in his 30s, born and raised in Hinton)

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> Pyramid mountain changed in my second year here. Just seeing it every day, floating down the river, paddling in a Voyager canoe…I mean, that's my job…and seeing how much it changes throughout the day. I would try to verbalize for people about what type of rock it is and how it changes throughout the day. I would tell them that it is gold in the morning, red in the afternoon, and purple at night, but it's hard to get across the meaning of that beauty in words. But for me, after seeing that so much, that mountain has come to be something that I really think is pretty great…Now I just love it. I can't get enough of it. I just love the way it changes so much. (female in her 40s, 2 year resident of Jasper)

The prevalence of this response led me to question why this 'change' and 'daily difference' was important: what was the meaning of that 'beauty'? The participants indicated that this type of ephemeral beauty gives perspective. According to participants, on the one hand the mountains evince the feeling that every day is precious, because respondents know that they will never see the mountains look exactly as they do today. On the other hand, regardless of how mundane or trying a day is, the sheer magnitude of the mountains was able to put life in perspective by means of their splendour—much of which comes from their constant change. Many interviewees used this language to communicate these beliefs.

> I think Jasper gives you the chance to live your present. Of course, you have to think about your future, especially as an immigrant, but I think Jasper reminds you that you need to live your present, because everything happens in the moment. In Jasper, because of the natural life, because of the wildlife, you see a thing in one second, and you'll never see that same thing again. (male in his 50s, 3 year Jasper resident)

*

> They are always changing. There are a lot of things in life that seem stagnant, so it is nice to wake up every morning and know that they're [the mountains] are going to be different. Also, it's nice to know that there are so many different things you can do in the mountains. There's so much beauty in them: I like that. They're also so mighty, there is not a lot of things that you see that are just incredible. Like, when I go to the city there is nothing that really makes you stop and think, whereas when you see the mountains they really make you stop and admire them, and think about your life, and how there is really more than just money and the little things like that. (female in her 20s, 10 year Hinton resident)

*

> They change all the time. There's just something about the mountains: life goes on, whatever you are dealing with, things will pass; they give a perspective about life. And it is something that you can see. And the mountain, although the face stays the same, the mountain changes just about every day. The sun will hit it a certain way, and all of a sudden you say, "Wow, look at that," and then in the next moment the clouds will come in and you'll be like, "Gee, I've never seen this before". (male in his 50s, 20 year Hinton resident)

Of the 22 interviewees from Hinton, 13 respondents made a strong statement regarding the importance of this change, such as 'they change all the time' or 'everyday they are different'. Six others did not use the same words, but described the same significance: that they provide perspective on life. Only two respondents did not mention change or perspective at all. For these two cases use was the most important consideration for them when discussing the mountains. For Hinton respondents, then, 19 out of 22 interviewees indicated that the change of the mountains was significant.

In Jasper, 10 participants made a strong statement regarding change, eight people used different language, but described the importance of the mountains for putting life in perspective, and only four did not mention either. The recording of the last remaining case was cut short due to the memory capacity of the digital recorder, and although my notes from this interview do not mention any reference to change, I cannot say conclusively whether or not it was mentioned. Of the four respondents who did not mention change, three were park wardens, and one was a long-time resident for whom English was not his first language. For Jasper, then, 18 out of 23 interviewees indicated that change of the mountains was significant. These numbers are not presented to imply any sort of statistical significance—the sample is obviously far too small—but is meant to highlight the regularity of this response.

Based on the findings, I am able to state that:

1. The underlying components of place communicated to me by these respondents included the recreational opportunities available to them, the quality of the physical environment that surrounded them, and their personal relationships. Certain respondents stressed the importance of balance between these three components as an important element of their sense of place. Participants also mentioned the importance of their homes and the town's services and infrastructure.
2. The meanings of some of these underlying components differed significantly between these two places. For Hinton respondents, personal relationships (or the social component) meant primarily family relationships, whereas in Jasper these relationships more often signified community relationships. The physical landscape for Jasper participants meant areas with little human impact, whereas for Hinton respondents it meant areas with few people and restrictions.
3. The land management systems of Hinton and Jasper did affect respondents' senses of place. Respondents consistently preferred to use the landscape that they were surrounded by and their criticisms of the neighbouring landscape invariably related to how the other landscape area was managed.
4. By looking at how respondents spoke of the mountains—the dominant feature of their physical landscape—it was apparent that physical components of place manifest themselves through both the social processes that attach meaning to the landscape and through the physical qualities themselves.

Chapter Six

DISCUSSION

The insights into sense of place that I have recorded in this project can contribute to community sustainability research; the policy makers and managers in Hinton and Jasper; these communities themselves; and the academic study of sense of place. It is not only what was uncovered during the course of this project that is of value, but also what was learned about using this photo-assisted methodology as a means of researching sense of place. I will discuss what this project brings to these areas, and what remains to be addressed below. First, however, I will elaborate further on some of the Findings, specifically, the role of balance in respondents' place components, the land management factor, and the social and physical processes of the mountains.

Balance of Physical, Social and Recreational

The physical, social and recreational components of life in Hinton and Jasper were those that were consistently spoken of as being the most important to contributing to respondents' senses of place. Moreover, a balance between these three components was also crucial. Although this topic of balance was an unexpected one for me going to into the interviews, the emphasis that respondents stressed in regards to it make this a significant finding that deserves further elaboration here.

The six respondents who felt their life was not balanced, expressed lower levels of satisfaction, and their attachment was strained. These respondents could still have a high level of attachment, but it was an attachment that caused stress since they felt they must leave their place in order to find the balance they longed for. Only participants who were not born and raised in either of these study communities described this type of experience. These participants indicated that one of the main components they deemed to be important about 'place' (the physical, social or recreational) was lacking.

Of all the six participants who indicated that something was lacking, it was invariably the social component they were speaking of, and they all indicated that because of this they would leave at some point. These participants communicated to me that the physical landscape and the recreational opportunities were perfect—everything they could possibly want—but their social needs were not being satisfied. This unbalance in their lives was enough incentive to inspire these participants to leave their community. Even the four participants who were very attached to their homes—because they had built and planned their current home, and it was the 'best' home they had owned yet—were still convinced that the social dissatisfaction they felt was enough to cause them to leave. In other words, despite a great home that they were strongly attached to, good jobs, incredible physical surroundings, and the best recreational opportunities they had ever known, these participants felt it was not enough to keep them in their community.

> Me: *All of this [dissatisfaction with your community] sounds like something that could potentially cause you to leave?*
>
> Oh yeah. It's funny that we are doing this because I am in the middle of trying to decide just that, to go somewhere else. I'm really torn about it, because if we do go we would be leaving so many of the things we truly do like….The mountains, my home, sort of the natural environment things which are around me. The ability to be able to drive 20 minutes and be in the bush. And probably, actually, my home. Because we spend a lot of time there, and we built it ourselves, put sweat, blood, heart and soul into it. I wake up in the morning and see the river and the mountains, and I go, "I don't want to leave this". So, I am torn right now. (female, 20 year Hinton resident)

No one in either community commented on a lack of satisfaction with the physical surroundings or with the recreational opportunities, although there were many who indicated that the employment opportunities were not plentiful.

Three of the six respondents who indicated a lack of balance in their current place had left healthy social relationships behind in order to live in the physical surroundings of Jasper and Hinton. This would seem to indicate that a lack of physical or recreational attachment could also cause an individual to leave a community. Two respondents who had moved to their current towns (Hinton and Jasper, respectively) for the physical landscape and recreational opportunities available there indicated that they would eventually leave because they had learned that these were not enough for them—without the social.

The indication from this project, then, is that an unsatisfactory social life is enough to take away residents who are otherwise completely satisfied. More than this, the residents who felt this lack of 'social satisfaction' were strongly attached to the physical environment, and the recreational opportunities. Among all the respondents who indicated a lack of satisfaction, the physical and the recreational were clearly expressed as the most important things in their life, at that moment. They were very happy that they could say that, and that they were able to live in such a magnificent physical setting, but they felt that the physical alone could not keep them there.

I stress the importance of the landscape for two of these participants, because it is all the more powerful that they have decided to leave a place that satisfies them on such an important level. One went to lengths to explain to me that she has always been very sensitive to her physical surroundings.

> Being in Jasper reminds me of this little book I read, and there is this one phrase "stunned by the beauty," and most days I can go outside and just be overwhelmed to the point of [she makes a 'choking on emotion' sound effect]. It used to be, before I lived in Jasper, that when we used to come here I used to get really choked up. It was a really basic, instinctual reaction: you know, I had no control over it. I would be crying, or, if not, then on the edge of tears. I can remember that. (female, 2 year Jasper resident)

When she lived in southern Ontario—where her physical satisfaction with the landscape was very low—she would feel emotionally, spiritually, and physically spent. She got to the point where she would have to jump in the car and drive north until she hit the Canadian Shield country, and when she did she claimed that she could feel the strain and tenseness leave her; she would feel a "physical weight being lifted off [her] shoulders," and feel immediately at peace as soon as she hit the rocks and trees that defined the Canadian Shield.

> I'm not joking! I would feel immediately better. The physical landscape is important to me like that. It is important for my mental, emotional and spiritual health.

This lack of satisfaction with her immediate physical surroundings in southern Ontario caused her to move to Jasper, despite the fact that her partner remained in Ontario, and she also left a good job at a large university. Despite all of this history, and the importance of physical surroundings in her life, she concluded that the physical was not enough. She had to move away from Jasper to achieve a greater balance.

> I realized while doing this project that my attachment to this place is probably 75% physical and 25% human. And, I don't know…I mean, it gives me a lot of peace, but I don't know if my life should be so lopsided in the lack of people. I could stand to be a little bit more people oriented.

The cases of respondents that felt a lack of social satisfaction bring to the foreground an important element that seems to underlie the sense of place of each respondent I spoke with, and that is balance. The respondents who did not communicate a lack of satisfaction support this contention that balance is important by the well balanced depiction of place that they presented. The interviews showed that the physical, the social and the recreational were the most important elements of one's sense of place. And, although one of these factors could take precedence at certain times, an overall balance was desired and (in most cases) met. All interviews from Hinton and Jasper seem to illustrate that balance is integral to a healthy sense of place.

Challenging the Land Management Factor

The assertion that land management type can be a major contributing factor in shaping these residents' senses of place could be challenged. One could argue that there are so many other variables that could contribute to one's sense of place that there is no qualitative way of delineating any concrete effects of only the land management system. One could argue that differences in age, upbringing, education level, and means of earning a living are every bit as important as land management in shaping how individuals will perceive a place, and how satisfied they will be with that place. Singling out land management as a key factor, for all of the participants in this study, may seem presumptuous.

In response, I am not contending that the land management systems of Hinton and Jasper were the only contributing factors to the development of these participants' senses of place. Instead, I am contending that the data showed a strong association between the management system that surrounded these residents and the landscapes that they preferred to use, and in the ways they used them. I have already allowed that age and upbringing seemed to influence how people recreated and evaluated landscape, but these did so in a manner that was still consistent with the current type of land management system of the respondent. The type of occupation of the respondent was not a good indicator of how respondents would discuss sense of place, and, neither did education appear to be a significant factor. There are many highly educated individuals who go into making a resource town function, and some of these were involved in this project. The participants I interviewed indicated to me that land management considerations were more important than these other possible influences (considered on their own).

For all of the participants in this project who were born in Hinton or Jasper, the type of land management system they were socialized with has remained a system they continue to support. Some of these respondents indicated that over the years they have been able to see the necessity of other land management systems, and so those other systems have become more acceptable to them. However, none of these participants indicated a shift away from the land management system in which they were raised. The exceptions are the two residents from the foothills who now live in the park, discussed above.

For the participants who came from afar, to either Hinton or Jasper, the land management system they settled in had come to be the system that they utilized the most. One respondent—who came to Hinton after leaving university—was opposed to forestry when she moved to Hinton, but came to prefer recreating in the industrial landscape as opposed to the park, for all the reasons indicated above. She found herself using the available landscapes in the same way as the residents who were born in Hinton. If an individual's education level were as important a consideration as the land management system in affecting one's sense of place, it would be expected that this university graduate would use the park more than the foothills. However, this case contradicts this expectation—she reported that she surprised even herself in her preference for recreating in the foothills. Her reason given for not wanting to recreate in the park was because it was too crowded and pampered. She still expressed a strong attachment to the park, and visits it frequently, but she has gained an appreciation for the wildness and beauty of the area surrounding Hinton. She is not the only such example from this study.

One could also challenge that proximity may be even more important than land management type. I have mentioned repeatedly that respondents indicated that they used the areas that were closest to them most frequently. This is not entirely accurate, however. Eighteen Hinton respondents recreated by driving back roads, looking for wildlife and/or camping at undesignated campsites. An example of these types of trips is one to the abandoned townsite of Mountain Park, which five respondents indicated as being a regular destination for them. Mountain Park, however, is farther than Jasper National Park, but it is located in the industrial landscape. The respondents that made the extra effort to recreate in Mountain Park highlighted the beauty, the peace and quiet, and the lack of restrictions that could be found there. Other respondents indicated other such places (in the industrial landscape) that were also far but which they preferred to recreate in, regardless of the distance.

Landscape management does not alone explain these residents' senses of place, but it does affect how they recreate and where they prefer to recreate. The use patterns of Hinton respondents were not seen as compatible with the recreational infrastructure in Jasper National Park, and vice versa. Residents who were able to adapt their use patterns to match what was provided by the other land management system had fewer complaints about that landscape.

The Social Processes and Physical Qualities of the Mountains

Of the five categories of response that I received from participants after asking directly about the importance of the mountains, one is based on experience of place (recreational opportunities), two are based on the social construction of place (harbour protected wilderness and world-renowned), and two are based on the psychological/emotional effects associated with the physical factors of place (security/presence and change). This fits with and is supported by the commonly held definitions of place and sense of place. What is exciting about these findings is that they also provide a good indication of how the physical factors of place can contribute to a sense of place, and in this example (of the mountains) these physical factors were cited as the most important consideration.

The change that occurs daily on the mountains was by far the most common answer given by my respondents for explaining why the mountains were important. More importantly, this 'change' was spoken of with a greater sense of importance than the other categories. All participants cited recreational opportunities as important, but this answer was only given in six cases (out of 45) as the most important reason for the mountains. Recreational opportunities were certainly important, but they were not the sort of answer that was able to capture the depth of meaning and importance that residents in this study felt towards the mountains—this response was typically a supporting reason. The interview data strongly supports the conclusion that it was the physical presence of the mountains that made them so important, and since the mountains were almost always cited as a key reason for living in Hinton and Jasper (there was only one case that stated the mountains were not important), the physical factors of place prove to be an extremely important consideration for the sense of place of residents in this study.

Some may dispute this assertion on the grounds that there is too much going on in people's construction of 'mountains' to be able to clearly state that the physical characteristics of the mountains play such an integral role. Certainly, all residents and visitors that come to the Rocky Mountains will have a preconception of the mountains—an 'idea' of the mountains—that will play a part in how these mountains will be perceived, and so, in part, how they will be experienced. For those residents and visitors who come from away, a sense of place for the Rocky Mountains will already exist before they arrive, even if this sense of place is not wholly formed, or elaborate. Further, for those residents who grow up in the mountains, all the experiences, stories, and social processes that surround and socialize that individual throughout her life will also impact how she perceives and/or experiences the mountains.

However, I would argue that the mountains have the ability to override—at least momentarily—all preconceived notions and ideas that these people may have, through their sheer magnitude, constant presence, and their physical reminder that life is fleeting. The feelings that participants were describing went beyond what their social groups 'believe' or what they have learned through family or books. It is important to realize that despite the many social demographic and land management differences that exist between residents of Hinton and Jasper, both communities used the same language to describe the emotion and the perspective that the mountains inspire in them due to this constant changing.

Take the case of the environmentalist and the logger (both real participants in this project) who used the same language to describe the impact of this physical process of changing light on the mountains' faces. Since the two come from very different social groups, educational backgrounds and worldviews, this shared answer (and language) is unlikely to have derived from social processes. There could be an outside chance that both social groups or worldviews managed to 'co-evolve' this discourse separately, in response to changing light, but this is unlikely since these answers both seemed to be spur of the moment, and previously unarticulated. In fact, for both of these participants the very question of 'what is so special about the mountains' was something they had never given serious, prolonged thought. For these respondents it had always been accepted or obvious that the mountains were just important, or beautiful—an answer far more socialized than personal. By prodding further, the identical answers I received from both of these participants seems more personal and unexpected.

One also could argue that it is a case of experience. Both the logger and the environmentalist had to experience living in proximity to the mountains; they had to experience noticing the singularity of particular moments of light on the mountains. Without this experience the physical characteristic of the mountains is not able to work. But what this amounts to is the experience of seeing, and these instances of 'noticing' often come as a surprise in the midst of doing something else. This level of experience is more passive or accidental than it is active or purposeful. Hurrying out of the house in the morning to get to work is the intended activity, and being stopped in one's tracks to take notice of the light on the mountains is unintentional and passive. It is more accurate to say that the mountains—and the light playing across them—are forcing the resident to experience them by their sheer beauty and the ephemeral nature of this beauty. The physical characteristics of those mountains and that light are what cause the person to stop in her tracks, and it is notice that allows the introspection and the perspective on life. This is an experience, but it is experience that is forced—or perhaps more accurately, encouraged—upon the seer rather than an experience or activity that is actively pursued by a person, or that requires any kind of involved participation by that person. This is much more a case of the physical characteristics affecting a person's sense of place, in a powerful way.

This is certainly not to argue a case for environmental determinism, but rather to bring attention to the role of physical factors in contributing to a sense of place—something that, as I have argued throughout this paper, has been largely overlooked by place theorists. This is a direct challenge to the purely constructivist perspective that contends that any importance that is attached to physical characteristics of a place can be explained away by the social importance being brought to bear upon that characteristic. I agree with, and the interview data of this project supports, the constructivist contention that the mountains are important because the world deems them so, and/or because of certain worldviews that attach importance to 'pristine' environments, but there is also more at work. Physical characteristics can stop people in their daily activities, regardless of social affiliation or personal worldview, and make them take notice. And, this contemplation inspired by this physical reminder is able—in the words of my participants—to aid residents in looking beyond their social worlds and to think in terms of a 'bigger picture'. Further, the data in this project does not only support this observation, but it also contends that this physical influence may be the most important consideration in regards to the mountains and their importance. In other words, when considering the dominant physical feature of the landscape in the vicinity of these two communities, it is indeed the physical factors of that physical feature that plays the strongest role, and not the social construction of meaning that surrounds that physical feature.

However, I want to draw attention to the point that it is not only the physical factors themselves that are important in regards to the mountains—the beauty of the light on the mountains—but also the role that being witness to this physical phenomenon plays in the lives of these residents. The physical manifestation of light playing across the face of mountain peaks is beautiful, and this is something that respondents commented on—the opportunity to 'see' such beauty was important. But, more so, the perspective inspired by this spectacle is the reason why the changing light on the rock faces was important. It is as if witnessing such a display inspires in the residents that I interviewed a feeling that what was most important in life was not the hustle and bustle, but being able to see such a view. It seemed to 'remind' participants that "whatever their problem", it wouldn't last; like the light on the mountains, it would change. The beauty of the dynamic scenes painted on the cliffs seemed to inspire in these respondents the feeling that what was important was not their 'petty human concerns' but rather being able to witness this light on the mountains. In a very powerful way, the mountains seem to challenge commonly accepted human priorities, such as making money, paying bills, and getting ahead in the world. Being captivated by the mountains in this way seems to instill in these respondents the conviction that there are more important things in the world, and one of those things is being able to see this spectacle.

Placing this project

The results that I have pulled out of the interview data show the importance of the social, experiential, and physical factors of place, and how intertwined these are. The data are able to provide insight on the meanings that are associated with these components of place, to illustrate the importance of the land management systems in each area, and to highlight the perspective and wonder that the mountains inspire in residents. The photo-assisted methodology that was employed in this project strengthens these findings due to the improved communication that was encouraged between respondents and me during the interviews.

Throughout this dissertation I have chosen not to separate out the visual from the non-visual data with much regularity. Instead, I have discussed the findings as a cohesive set. I have done this because the interview data are the data that the results from this project are premised on, but the interview data were improved due to the aid of the photographic assignment. I certainly do not want to give the impression that the visual component of this methodology was of little importance. Rather, I found the visual exercise to be of use both to me and to the respondents, and it was from this that all of the interviews emerged.

First, the photo-assignment was a major incentive for participation. It opened doors to me during my recruitment stage, and it allowed me an opportunity to engage many people who otherwise may not have been interested in hearing about my 'sense of place project'. Sense of place is difficult enough to explain to other social scientists, let alone to people who are busily going about their lives. The visual component was key for breaking the ice in regards to this project and trying to explain what it was I was researching. Somehow it just made more sense to explain it by asking for photographs.

Second, it was apparent that the process of photographing was integral to allowing the participant to grasp the essence of the research questions I was pursuing, and in allowing participants to express themselves adequately. The photographs provided residents and me with a point of departure for exploring a variety of place issues, from topics such as attachment, satisfaction and meanings; to concerns about the continued success of their place; and even to suggestions about what would make their place more liveable. Furthermore, at the end of the process there exists a large visual commentary depicting Hinton and Jasper respondents' senses of place. Throughout the study, participants continually asked about the photographs of other residents. A staff member from one of the local museums suggested that this project would make an ideal community exhibit that could inspire dialogue and interest about what makes their place special. This methodology not only contributed to validity and reliability in responses, by improving understanding between respondents and me, but it also has the potential to provide these communities with a means towards fostering social cohesion and capital.

Community Sustainability Research

These respondents support the argument that even though the world is more global than ever before, place remains important. These two forest-dependent communities, situated in very close proximity, displayed strikingly different responses to land management, but both exhibited high levels of attachment, satisfaction and commitment. Despite the fact that cities continue to grow, these residents have attested to the fact that there still remain strong ties to rural places. This has important implications for sustainability research.

It has become commonly accepted that sustainable resource extraction requires not only sustainable environmental management, but also sustainable social and economic systems to support this extraction (Beckley et al., 2002; Hart, 2000). The Sustainable Forest Management Network's vision is that "the forests of Canada will maintain their extent, diversity, and ecological vitality and be managed in a manner that will provide for the broad social, cultural and economic needs of all Canadians" (http://sfm-1.biology.ualberta.ca/english/network/index.htm). Early thinking about community stability placed primacy on the availability of jobs, which was considered directly commensurate with timber supply. This is no longer the case—if ever it was. Advances in technology have now allowed the forest industry to process more wood with less labour, meaning that wood production has increased while the number of jobs have decreased (Beckley et al., 2002).

Coates (2001) traces the history of resource dependent communities in Northern British Columbia, and highlights many of the challenges they have faced since their conception following World War Two. Tied to the fluctuating demand of international markets, losing employment opportunities to technological advances, and struggling to retain residents in the region, Northern British Columbia has struggled to create sustainable resource communities. There is a long history of major investors from the south repatriating profits from the northern resource base back to southern economies, and of workers that come north to make their fortune, but then quickly depart to spend it elsewhere (Coates, 2001). The issues that Coates raises for resource communities in Northern BC are the same challenges that face many rural communities across Canada.

Resource communities will continue to be of importance, however, because these are the areas that supply the world with the natural resources that fuel the global economy. The sustainability literature, both from an ecological and a sociological perspective, contends that in order to harvest resources sustainably we must foster sustainable resource communities (Crumpacker, 1998; Coates, 2001). Beckley et al. (2002) contend that community stability and sustainability are desirable for these resource communities due to the individual and societal costs that are associated with continually constructing and decommissioning physical infrastructure in these regions, and due to the "wildly fluctuating local populations in specific communities" (p. 627). These authors call for the identification of "meaningful and useful indicators for the purpose of tracking community sustainability" (2002, p. 627). These authors refer to sense of place as a process indicator as opposed to the more commonly used profile indicators. Data on education levels, income, employment rates and real estate values are all examples of profile indicators: these are static and describe a place at a given moment in time (Beckley et al., 2002). The strength of process indicators is that 1) they "embrace variation within and between communities, rather than seeking uniform, standardized approaches"; 2) some include "community-based assessments not only of priorities for sustainability but also community-based evaluations about whether sustainability is being achieved"; 3) they "focus on the dynamic, process-based nature of communities—their adaptability in the face of external challenges; what residents *do* rather then who or how they *are*" (emphasis in original, Beckley et al., 2002, p. 632).

Sense of place, then, is a malleable indicator that could be used to measure levels of attachment, satisfaction and commitment to place; probe for meanings, values and emotive qualities of place; gauge feelings, concerns and hopes for place; and it could be measured with both quantitative and qualitative methodologies (see Stedman, 2002; Eisenhauer et al., 2000; Lavin, 1984 for some examples). Sense of place is an indicator of community sustainability that goes beyond documenting a snapshot of community statistics. It provides rich, detailed insight into why people live where they live, how they use place, and the meanings, habits, and values that they associate with place. This type of information is extremely valuable to assessing sustainability. It is one thing to measure a community's commitment to remaining in a place, but another thing completely to gain an understanding of how they use it and the meanings of place they value most. A group of people could be very attached and satisfied with their place, but use it and value it in an unsustainable way. The power of sense of place is that it measures across different levels: it can measure the attachment and satisfaction of residents, but it can also provide insight into how sustainably those residents conceive of, and use, place. This meets the challenge posed by Parkins et al. (2001) to identify social indicators that address a "suite of sustainability concerns," thus moving research "out of the realm of community development" and "into the realm of sustainability research" (p. 44-45).

The qualitative methodology used in this project does not allow me to generalize with statistical confidence beyond my sample of participants, but it does represent a good cross-section of Hinton and Jasper residents, and it does allow me to delve deeper than a survey would. Policy makers, town managers, and community researchers could benefit from a mixed-methods approach to sense of place. The richness of detail that I have attained from these 45 participants provide regionally significant themes and questions that could provide the framework for constructing a place-specific questionnaire that could be distributed using survey methodology to test conclusions with a more extensive sample. The survey methodology has the advantage of then allowing one to generalize with more confidence to the population as a whole. Regardless of the methodology that is employed, however, sense of place research provides a framework for measuring the sustainability of communities.

The data provide numerous examples of this ability. The vast majority of Jasper participants made reference to the difficulty of remaining in Jasper, yet almost all of them communicated that they would try. Financially, many indicated that Jasper was not the best option for them—they would be able to live for cheaper and earn more money in a different location—but other components of place compensated for this drawback. The participant, who indicated that after 30 years he had recently been told that he was now qualified to draw on the network of friends he had earned over the years, attests to the social capital that Jasper residents alluded to throughout the interviews. This type of information is important for town managers, policy makers, and researchers who study community sustainability, because it provides evidence of a community that is taking care of itself in the face of adversity.

Hinton and Jasper respondents indicated that outdoor recreational opportunities, the quality of the natural surroundings, and their personal relationships, were all key variables to their attachment and satisfaction with place. "Jobs" were important, but primarily because they allowed respondents to live where and how they desired. The indication seems to be that these respondents were concerned less with economic well-being than with lifestyle and "livelihood," a term further developed by Urquhart (2001) to refer not solely to earning a living, but also to describe

> "conduct" or the "kind or manner of life" led by people. In this respect, it may incorporate inmaterial subjects such as faith and spiritual connections with land or with specific places (p. 128).

Respondents only mentioned the economy as a means of supporting the more important components of place or the manner of life they valued. This manner of life almost always entailed recreation in the outdoors and maintaining personal relationships. Making money for the sake of having money was never indicated as being important. The information gathered from this project both supports and challenges some of Urquhart's conceptions, however.

Urquhart (2001) writes about the environmental conflict that erupted in the late 1990s in regards to the Cheviot Mine that was proposed for the Hinton area. The conflict arose because the mine was to be situated against the eastern boundary of Jasper National Park. Hinton residents strongly supported the proposed mine, and felt that without it their way of life would be threatened. Jasper National Park and the majority of Jasper residents opposed the mine due to environmental concerns. However, the issue became larger than a regional dispute as environmental groups from across Alberta and Canada became involved. Urquhart describes a situation where both the proponents and opponents to the mine poorly represented issues of 'livelihood'. He contends that environmentalists only focused on the 'nature' and 'play' issues that would be threatened by the mine, whereas Hinton proponents only focused on livelihood issues—although, according to Urquhart, they did so only in a "narrow and unimaginative way" (2001, p. 137).

The findings from this project could have informed both Urquhart and the residents of Hinton and Jasper that not only Jasper residents were concerned about "nature and play" issues, but that it is also very likely that Hinton residents were as well. The data from this project appear to indicate that Hinton residents were not concerned with economics per se, but with their ability to remain in the area and to live in the manner they valued most, namely, being able to enjoy the outdoors and to maintain their personal relationships. Urquhart's conception of livelihood, then, is even more powerful when viewed through the sense of place that has been recorded in this project. For Urquhart, conflict arises because one group thinks more about nature and play while the other more about a limited conception of livelihood. I suggest, however, that nature and play was also what Hinton residents were concerned about. What differed were the land management types that supported these communities, and how these residents evaluate the places where nature and play could thrive.

Combining Urquhart's conception of livelihood and my understanding of the sense of place of a handful of Hinton residents results in some useful insights. First, Hinton and Jasper residents were ultimately fighting for the same things, "nature" and "play". Hinton residents may be surprised to realize that they were fighting not for economics but for a "manner of life", or sense of place, that perhaps could have been defended in a number of ways. Indeed, as Urquhart points out, this has already happened since the Japanese demand for Cheviot's coal has waned, making the mine economically unfeasible, forcing the Town of Hinton to look for ways of diversifying its economy.

Jasper residents may be surprised to know that Hinton residents were not fighting for "jobs" per se, but for the environment and their way of life in that environment. Second, opponents to the mine, and other environmental advocates in similar contexts, tend to make the false assumption that valuing nature and play in nature precludes industrial activity in nature. As mentioned earlier, the contention that Jasper National Park is a more appropriate depiction of "nature" and "playground" than the industrial landscape surrounding Hinton is not an empirically supportable statement, but is a matter of values, familiarity and opinion. Perhaps the knowledge that Hinton residents value nature and play as strongly as Jasper residents can provide a bridge over which the two communities could venture into new areas of understanding about how to see and use these landscapes. Otherwise, Jasper and Hinton residents face the possibility of drifting further apart in their conceptions of what each community means and what is important to people in the other community:

> I don't know how those people deal with seeing those cutblocks, emotionally. I expect some of them don't even notice. There's a house in Valemont, a nice big house that says, "This house supported by forestry dollars". I suppose if your livelihood comes from forestry then those cutblocks have a different meaning for you than it would for me whose livelihood comes primarily from tourism. I mean, I'm a blue-collar grunt, just like a plumber or whatever, but my community is supported primarily by tourism dollars. The main difference is that Hinton exists because of resource extraction and Jasper exists because of resource protection, and they are very, very different. They keep trying to tie us together: Jasper, Hinton, Edson and Whitecourt, but we just don't fit together. When they try to make political alliances it just doesn't work out because their job is to make more business and our job is to make less business, and make it work with what we have. Their job is to provide more jobs for their kids, our job is to protect resources so that we will be able to share them in a 100 years. We are really two different communities in a lot of ways. When I was a kid we used to go to Hinton

> all the time for dances. They used to come here and we used to go there, but I don't think that happens too much anymore. (male in his 50s, born and raised in Jasper)

Urquhart's conception of livelihood—manner of life—approaches my conception of sense of place, which is really focusing on the manner of life that people hold dearest. Local residents, policy makers, and community researchers could benefit from the realization that what Hinton residents are most concerned about is that they be able to continue living in a place that meets their needs and values, from the outdoor opportunities present in the landscape, to the personal relationships that are wrapped up in the community. The sense of place of the respondents also indicates, however, that Hinton has historically identified itself as a mining community. This is another factor that should not be downplayed or overlooked. The proposed Cheviot Mine was valued for its ability to support a way of life, but it also offers Hinton residents a way to support their self-perception. Any effort to oppose this mine not only threatens their ability to live in a satisfactory manner, but it also threatens their identity.

Respecting the historical perspective of Hinton's sense of place, and understanding what its residents were really fighting for, opens new doors for addressing future environmental conflicts. Urquhart suggests that policy and governmental supports be put in place to encourage such resource communities to search out sustainable livelihood alternatives. Any such framework needs to be informed by place-specific information about residents' own perceptions of livelihood, as well as their historical conception of what sort of a place they think they live in.

Sense of Place Theory

Land Management

This project not only has the potential to inform community sustainability issues, but also the academic study of place. As mentioned in the Literature Review section, sense of place research has largely been conducted by trying to focus on specific components of place. The strong indication from these respondents is that balance is crucial to a satisfactory place, and therefore, place research should attempt to study place issues in a more holistic manner.

Freudenburg et al. (1995) argue that place researchers should acknowledge the "inseparability" of place components, and move away from the nature/society divide. These authors contend that "'physical facts' are likely in many cases to have been shaped strongly by social construction processes" and that even those phenomena that appear to be "strictly social" are often responses to "stimuli and constraints from the biophysical world" (1995, p. 366). My argument that land management plays a role in how respondents recreated, and evaluated landscapes for recreation, illustrates this inseparability of social and physical elements of place. Moreover, it does so on two levels.

First, individuals experience the landscapes they are surrounded by, and this is facilitated and constrained by the social structures that provide the infrastructure for them to recreate. Already here we see the social and physical merging: what seems like simply an individual experience—for instance, camping beside a river—is affected by the social system that enabled (or constrained) access to that river for camping. The social system could have made the river accessible via road construction, or it could have fostered a more remote experience by not providing access to it. Either way, the social structure of land management has already influenced that individual's experience with her physical environment. However, the second level on which the social and physical worlds blur is upon arriving back in one's community. The social environment of the community surrounds and influences the individual experience of place. Back in town the individual realizes that the people in the supermarket, or her friends and family, are able to live so close to such rivers because of the forest and mining industries that provide for their livelihood. Again, however, the personal experience of noticing the constantly changing light upon the mountains may momentarily separate one from her social position, and give her perspective on a 'bigger picture' that challenges these more socialized notions.

Jasper respondents almost never used the landscapes outside of the national park, and the most common explanations of this, from their perspective, is that there are so many things to do, and so many beautiful places, in the park that they do not need to go outside of it for recreation. On the surface this seems like a function of the physical characteristics of Jasper National Park: it is large and consists of a dramatic physical landscape. However, looking further, it also seems to be a result of the strong social influence of both the community and park management. Residents in Jasper are constantly reminded that they live in a world-renowned park—by park brochures, signs, photography and people's comments—and so the incentive to venture out of it is decreased. The socially accepted truth for Jasper residents, then, is that Jasper is as good as it gets.

One Jasper resident, who was not a participant in this project, shared a story with me about using the foothills near Hinton, outside of the park. She was new to Jasper and did not realize that it was uncommon for Jasper residents to use the foothills. She told me that she became somewhat of a celebrity based on the fact that she ventured out of the park. More established residents thought it strange and curious that she would have chosen to hike 'out there', and continued to ask her about her experience, and tease her about it, for a while after the fact. Place experience for residents of both Jasper and

Hinton, then, can be seen to work both on the personal level of experience—seeing and interacting in stunning landscapes—but also through the influences of the social structures that reinforce or constrain certain behaviours.

The result is that interactions between social and physical factors merge and blur between experiences in both worlds, and by the trailing, or blending, of one world into the next. And, it is doing this both at the individual experiential level and through the larger social milieu within which the individual is situated. The challenge for researchers, then, is to pursue points of interaction and intersection between the social and physical components of place, with the intention of understanding how they work in conjunction with one another. This is crucial, since this research supports the notion that the social and physical work together in place, and not separately.

Time and the Outside

It is also apparent from the case of Hinton's identification with their mining history, and Jasper's conception that the national park is as good as it gets, that not only is place working on both an individual and social level, but it is also working through different layers of time, and is affected by influences from inside and outside of place. This supports Massey's (1994; 1995) conception of place, and the contention that time and the 'outside' need to be incorporated more sufficiently into place definitions. To understand the sense of place of my respondents, it is important to consider the role of history and world opinion in these places. The past affects how the people of Hinton, and Jasper, conceive of themselves today. Hinton residents appear to take pride in the heritage of rugged working people that founded their community, and Jasper residents appear to take pride in the rugged and adventurous explorers that settled in what is now the park. Both communities take pride in living in an area that attracts approximately a million visitors yearly, and they both refer to the physical location of their places, which have easy access to the 'outside'.

Sense of place is not static, however. It changes through time as new experiences and stimuli affect long held beliefs about place, and as the outside migrates in, and some of the inside migrates out. Beckley et al. (2002) and Massey (1994, 1995) talk about this dynamic nature of place, and my respondents often indicated how their place conception changed over even short periods of time. The university graduate who moved to Hinton and disliked forestry, but later found that she preferred to recreate in the industrial landscape; and the numerous residents who indicated that as they had families their use, and sense, of place changed, indicate how place is not something to be explained at one point in time. Again, place works through different layers of time, and as such, researchers need to incorporate an awareness of this into their theory of place.

The qualitative nature of this project allowed me to access past and present influences on place, as well as future hopes. However, these would be harder to grasp within a survey methodology. Certainly, levels of attachment and satisfaction could be measured with a questionnaire, but researchers should be aware that this is likely to measure a profile for only a moment in time. This snapshot would not be a complete analysis of place but only a glimpse into a portion of that place. This is not to suggest that a fuller conception of place through time cannot be approached through survey methods, but that the importance of time in place must be recognized before it can be measured and understood.

I have already touched on some of the differences that arose between residents who were newer to the community and those who were long-time residents, but I would like to elaborate on this topic. The data seemed to indicate that long-time residents used more categories to evaluate place, and explain attachment to place, than newer residents. Generally, long-time residents would list family, community services, town events, the mountains, and a number of other factors, as contributing to their sense of place. Newer residents, on the other hand, would often list primarily the beauty of the mountains, and the availability of recreational opportunities. Respondents typically indicated that there came a point when other characteristics had to be met if they were to remain longer in that place.

It did not seem to me that long-time residents had a 'better' or more significant sense of place than newer residents. Newer residents displayed a number of characteristics that are important to consider in place theory. First, newer residents often displayed more excitement about their place than long-time residents, and an overall greater sense of exploration and discovery. One respondent explained this by positing, "travellers seek out those special places, whereas maybe if you're more indigenous to a place you take it more for granted". The example she gave to illustrate this point was a park interpreter at Grasslands National Park in Saskatchewan who took her to a beautiful lookout. The interpreter confided in her that he had never been to that lookout until he became an interpreter and started taking people there, although he had spent his entire life just down the road from it. There does exist this possibility that new-comers may experience a place in ways that long-time residents never have, and possibly even inspire the long-time residents to see things afresh. This may be due to this sense of exploration at being in a new place, or perhaps because newcomers may have less social commitment demanding their time. Either way, it is important to revisit Tuan's (1975) observation that "the passage of time itself does not ensure experience. One person may know a place intimately after a five-year sojourn; another has lived there all his life and it is to him as unreal as the unread books on his shelf" (p. 164). Certainly there could be a number of individual characteristics that contribute to how one experiences a place, but I contend that newness will also likely affect this.

A related topic to 'time spent' in place has to do with seasonality of experience, which was introduced in the literature review (Feldman, 1990; Rudzitis, 1991; Stedman, 2002). Place theorists have compared place perceptions between seasonal and permanent residents (Stedman, 2002), as well as some issues related to mobility (Rudzitis, 1991), but what has received less attention, are the alternate versions of 'place relationships' that are developing in response to increased mobility, and the need for many to work in large urban centers. It is not uncommon to hear of long distance place relationships, where seasonal (or intermittent) encounters become the only means of keeping in touch with meaningful places. Although the amount of time spent in the actual place may be small, the importance of the place may be very profound. Seasonal, or intermittent, contact with a particular place, or a number of places, may be integral to the happiness and peace of mind of certain individuals (or groups of people). This thinking is consistent with Korpela's (2001) use of attention restoration theory to explain favourite places. These relationships can get very complicated, however, as the ease of mobility now allows travellers to explore more and more places, allowing the list of meaningful places to swell. A person with high levels of emotional attachment to a number of places could become overwhelmed or frustrated by the impossibility of giving each place the attention she thinks they deserve.

This blurs the line between 'old' and 'new' to a place, since the relationship may span 10 years, but include only one month (or less) every spring. It would not be fair to simply tally this and conclude they have spent only 10 months in that place, because that person is likely to have experienced a large amount of anticipation throughout the rest of the year, when she longs for and talks about her favourite place, and plans for her next encounter with it. The fact that it remains an "other" place, however, remains significant. For instance, if it carries so much meaning for her, why has she not moved there? What attaches her to her "full-time" place? Are these attachments anchors or magnets

(Beckley, 2002)? For example, one respondent in this study was a student who had spent two summers in Jasper, but who is still attending university in a large city. While she would prefer to live in Jasper she knew that it was not an option. She seemed to display strong levels of attachment to Jasper, despite the fact that she was not able to live there.

This illustrates further the importance of considering the effects of the "outside" on the "inside", as Massey (1995) urges. It may be important to ask about the (possible) "other" places that a respondent is involved with, and what these *mean* and *do* for her. This could be critical for understanding the respondent's full-time place, especially if the "other" place is significant in making the full-time place more liveable. In other words, perhaps the full-time place is liveable precisely because the resident has the memory, thought and anticipation of the "other" place (or places) to draw on during those times when her actual place is less than satisfying (which may or may not be often). This deserves more attention by place scholars and such places should not be written off as simply 'holiday locations'. There could be instances where the person identifies, relates, and has a greater attachment to the "other" place (or places) than she does to her full-time place. Or, that the "other" place may be such a large part of her self-identity that it is constantly present—in her thoughts and imagination—in her full-time place, making the two places more like one vast, complicated place situated over a large geographical space. For example, some immigrants live in Canada not entirely, but with one leg in their place of birth, and one leg in their new home. I was raised in a family of new immigrants to Canada, and they truly seemed to live not only here, but also in the place where they had come from, so that any understanding of their attachment to Canada would have to incorporate knowledge of their attachment to their first home.

Future Research

This research has raised a number of questions that could be approached in future research. First, land management affects how residents use and conceive of place, which then influences how they evaluate the quality of other places. In other words, attachment to particular landscape types seemed to translate into lower levels of satisfaction with different landscape types. What remains to be shown, however, is how this relationship functions. Possible research could focus on trying to gauge how land management systems and local residents interact: is it through intentional public relations that land managers influence local perceptions, or do preferences evolve as unintended consequences of other management strategies. For example it could be argued that Jasper residents feel less inclined to use the landscape around Hinton because Parks Canada publishes and exhibits information that praises the environmental quality of Jasper National Park exclusively. Or, perhaps it has little to do with what Parks Canada says, but what they do. Even the presence of the boundary may be enough to influence how residents (and visitors) use the Rocky Mountains and foothills, without any intentional management that highlights only the beauty of the park.

One possible line of research could look at the mandates of the primary land management structures in Hinton and Jasper to assess the public's reaction to, and awareness and evaluation of, these mandates. Does park use indicate that management strategies are affecting how residents and visitors conceive of place in Jasper National Park, or does it seem that people are responding to unarticulated implications of this management? In Hinton, one could look at the forest industry's public relations initiatives and compare these to how residents use place, and the reasons they give for using particular places. Do residents acknowledge the forest industry (or Parks Canada) as a primary agent for influencing how they use the landscape?

It is also unclear how much influence external factors have on Hinton and Jasper residents. The data indicate that visitors from away help to remind locals that they are lucky to live where they live. And, many respondents indicated that the easy access to major centers, airports, and the ability to get away was very important. One could focus on the role of the outside on Hinton and Jasper, however, and delve deeper into how access to, and experience with, distant locations helps to shape place for these communities. The Cheviot Mine conflict pitted Hinton against Jasper National Park, some Albertan and other larger environmental groups, and many urban residents from across Canada. How did this inside/outside conflict affect how Hinton residents conceive of themselves, their place, and those non-local 'others'?

Jasper, on the other hand, appears to have a contradictory relationship with the masses of people who descend on their community every year. Some residents indicated that the million visitors to their park every year, and the large amount of seasonal residents who come to work for the tourist season, create a tighter bond between the permanent residents. Jasper has recently won the right to form its own municipal government for the townsite, which was traditionally governed by Parks Canada. This is a big step for Jasper residents, but Parks Canada—based out of Ottawa—is still responsible for all park management (now excluding the townsite). Local residents certainly do not use only the townsite but the whole park. What does this inside/outside tension mean for Jasper residents, and how does it contribute to their self-definition?

The importance of these Hinton and Jasper examples lies not with these specific communities, but by highlighting how the outside affects place conceptions. Like time, the influence of the outside needs to become a greater area of consideration in place scholarship. The outside affects the inside by its very existence and as such it is worthwhile to delve into local perceptions of place considered through this theoretical lens.

The challenge in incorporating these more intensive investigations into place research is that it could cause researchers to lose sight of the complexity of place. In the literature review I argued for the need to study 'place as inhabited', because only in this way will researchers do justice to the multitude of considerations that go into making a place home. It is too easy to focus solely on social construction, experience, or physicality, but it is crucial that place scholars consider them all when discussing place. This does not need to preclude scholarship that focuses on one component of place creation, such as time or the outside, but suggests the need to insert that component back into the complex web that makes up place before the research is completed. Place scholarship will benefit from research that delves deeper into place issues in order to then place that newfound knowledge back into the kaleidoscope that makes up place.

Challenges to Data Collection

I faced challenges in the collection of data for this project, and a discussion about these challenges may benefit researchers who intend to use a similar methodology or to work in similar communities as Hinton and Jasper, and so I will discuss these here. The greatest challenges arose in respect to drawing a representative sample from each of these two communities, and these difficulties were related to time. In Hinton, time conspired against me to make the procurement of volunteers from the forestry sector difficult, and in Jasper, time was a constant source of frustration.

Hinton is an industry town, with forestry and mining playing an integral role in the local economy. As it turned out, sampling from the forestry sector provided the most challenges. What else is there in a forestry town other than the forestry sector? There are all the stores and shops that service that town, as well as the businesses that service and supply the mill. These were the people who were the most accessible to me: people working in shops, restaurants, coffee shops, or those who worked in offices that served walk-in traffic. Women were predominant in this type of occupation. I struggled to reach foresters, loggers and mill workers despite being in a forestry town; and, I had more women than men in my sample.

I soon learned this should not have been a surprise. Shift work is common in Hinton, and that means that men are working a variety of hours, some weeks in the daytime and other weeks during the night. They work four days on, 12 hours a day, and then they have four days off, which many often spend out of town. All of this makes 'bumping' into these residents an unlikely event. The few I was able to contact usually replied that they "didn't have time". Even when another participant would suggest somebody who worked for the mill—at my request, since in later stages I was specifically asking for possible contacts at the mill—the contact would often not pan out due to shift work. Shift work is a reality of life in Hinton that everybody is aware of and deals with, even if they do not work for the mill themselves. Arranging barbeques, birthday parties, dinners and any other social event becomes almost impossible when trying to invite multiple people from the mill. As a researcher, this is something that never entered into my planning, since it is a reality very separate from that in which I live.

I originally did not directly approach the mill for recruits because I did not want my participants to be pre-selected by those in upper management positions. I finally succumbed and was in touch with the manager of the mill who also sits on the board that funded part of my research. Once he knew whom I worked for, and that the board was a major partner in this research, he assured me that he could have six participants for me by the week's end. I was concerned that the resulting participants would not have had a chance to hear the 'pitch' for the project from me, and that it was likely that they would not be as 'voluntary' as desired, and consequently I worried about the amount of effort and interest they would show because of this. Nonetheless, due to the lack of alternatives, and my own time constraints, I took the recruits that the manager supplied for me.

Jasper presented another obstacle. During the summer season the town explodes with tourist activity and so the resident population swells, with most of the seasonal workers employed somewhere in the service industry—working for hotels, restaurants, or some sort of shop. Because this two to four month period is by far the greatest money-earning period out of Jasper's year, residents are encouraged to work as much as possible in the summer and store up financial reserves for the lean winter months. Trying to recruit participants in this type of manic work environment proved to be very difficult.

Seasonals epitomize the overwhelming workload that Jasper residents face in the summer months, but I needed seasonals in my sample in order to address certain of my research questions. In particular, one component of the question of how physical place and social place affect sense of place or place attachment has to do with length of residence in a community. Are those who are 'new' to a community attached to different things than those who are long-time residents? Would newcomers express more attachment to mountains, lakes and scenery, and those with a longer history in the town speak more about their community of friends, family and places with personal significance (i.e., the place where they first met their husband)? In order to begin to address these questions I desired good representation across my sample, but seasonal residents were a difficult population to recruit and turned out to be rather unreliable even when recruited. Out of six seasonals who were recruited for the project, two left town before I could even collect their cameras and a third finally had to back out because of work.

Despite these constraints, I believe the participants selected represent an adequate range of perspective in Jasper. I was still concerned, however, that the hectic nature of a summer season in Jasper would limit the amount of time and incentive my participants had for thoughtfully participating. Finding a varied sample of 25 participants is one thing, but finding 25 who have the incentive and time to engage in the project earnestly is another matter. I am certain that out of the 45 participants that constitute my final sample (of both communities) there were a handful (3-5) that did not put much thought into the pictures they took. Instead, these participants took pictures of whatever was easiest and most convenient. However, the interviews bared this out, and I was able to approach more sincere answers by questioning them directly. A standard question in my interviews was "Are there any other pictures you would have liked to include?". This question was one of the last questions I asked and so the participant at this point had a better understanding of what it was I was looking for and trying to ascertain. This question helped to add quality to those collections of photographs that I felt were rushed or rather thoughtlessly put together. Overall though, I found that the vast majority of participants put serious thought into this project. I think a big part of this quality is attributable to the uniqueness of this methodology. Participants seemed genuinely intrigued and excited at the task I presented them with. The questions being asked of them and the fact that they were able to answer through photographs seemed to pique their interest, and I think this is illustrated in the richness of the responses.

Despite this interest, however, on more than one occasion the question arose "What do you plan to do with this when you're done?" Is it important that my participants understand my research project the same way that I do? In practice, I told participants that we were trying to understand what 'attaches people to place', or 'why they live where they live'. I would often explain it in terms of land managers and town planners who wish for a committed citizenry that will remain in the area, as opposed to transients who came to town to make money and then soon depart. I would explain that by asking a variety of people what makes their place home for them, managers could perhaps reach a better understanding of what was important to their citizenry. I always added, however, that that was only one component of the study, and that another major component of the project was strictly academic. I would say that as a sociologist I was interested in how people are attached to place, and whether the landscape plays a significant role in this attachment. I would not elaborate on this much more, unless I was asked to. Some participants seemed genuinely interested in both the academic and applied implications of the research, while others seemed uninterested or unconcerned, and still others seemed to be confused by the reasons for the project but were happy to be involved. Regardless, all participants appeared to enjoy this project, and many commented on how the project really made them think about things that they had never given thought to before.

The very nature of this project, then, both challenges the researcher due to the time that must be invested by both the researcher and the participants, and also helps to keep all parties interested in completing the project. In the future, however, greater sensitivity to the time requirements of participants should be considered both for how a project such as this will affect participants and also how participants' schedules could potentially detract or add to the quality of data.

Photographs

For the most part, directions were carried out as instructed. The most common exception from the instructions was that numerous participants submitted more than the requested 12 photographs. Most who submitted more than 12 photographs submitted only a small number more, such as 13 or 15 photographs altogether. However, there were a few participants who submitted between 18 and 24 photographs. Submissions of this magnitude greatly altered my interviewing strategy. If I were to inquire after 24 photographs in the same depth that I inquired after the standard 12 photographs the interview would have easily exceeded four hours.

An oversight in the original planning had to do with the availability of certain subject matter for (immediate) photographing. This fieldwork was conducted in the summer and early autumn, but many participants voiced strong attachment to winter activities or scenes. As well, some participants had a particular picture already in their collection that for them spoke volumes about what makes their life rich in the place in which they reside. Due to both of these situations, I began to inform all my participants that they could submit old photographs if it was of something that could not be recaptured, or if it was meant to represent a different season. I continued to stress, however, that I thought it best for participants to actively photograph most of their pictures as a large part of my interest in them taking pictures was for the thought processes that would be involved in them actually photographing subjects.

Chapter Seven

CONCLUSION

This research employed an innovative qualitative photo-assisted methodology to explore the sense of place of respondents in two rural communities in Alberta. The objectives of this study were 1) to explore sense of place in a manner that allowed for the inseparability of social and physical components of place, and therefore allows and encourages each to manifest itself through the research design and instrument; 2) to approach sense of place with an innovative methodology that would allow the richness and diversity of meanings, beliefs and values of place to be successfully communicated; and, 3) to test this photo-assisted methodology for its effectiveness as a management tool for forest policy makers, town managers, and community researchers.

This project provided strong support for the assertion that physical characteristics of place are important to one's sense of place, but it also highlighted the numerous and complex ways that physical and social elements intertwine. The photo-assisted methodology contributed to high quality interview data due to the improved communication between participants and me in regards to sharing what were oftentimes hard to grasp sense of place topics and issues. Not only did this methodology allow respondents an easy way to understand the research topic but it also provided them a powerful medium for responding. The use of photographs proved to be an invaluable tool for conveying the richness of meanings, values and beliefs that were embedded in respondents' senses of place. The methodology was practical and easy to use and as such provides an innovative and useable tool for researchers and managers that are interested in understanding the many factors that contribute to a sense of place.

Summary of Findings

Respondents consistently indicated the need for a balanced existence in their place, and they invariably referred to social, physical and experiential elements of place that constituted this balance. All three categories were necessary for these participants to feel satisfied with their place. Residents who were the most satisfied with their place described all three elements as being of high quality, while those who were unsure about their continued residence in the community always described one of these categories as less than ideal. The only place element that was ever referred to as less than ideal in either of these communities was the social component.

The social elements of place primarily consisted of relationships with friends and family, or simply the sense of belonging, that the resident was able to access in her place. The physical factors referred to the availability of 'bush', wilderness, wildlife and mountains for both communities, as well as the physical location of each of these towns, and the ease with which respondents could get away for holidays and excursions. The experiential elements related to the outdoor recreational opportunities that were available to respondents in the landscape that surrounded each community. Without exception, all respondents would walk me through this same list of attachments and satisfactions in regards to their place: the abundance and proximity of outdoor recreational opportunities, the quality and importance of the natural world, and the significance of personal relationships. Participants also commonly referred to their homes—which would often include photographs and descriptions of their garden—as a crucial component to their sense of place, as well as the caliber of town services, facilities and infrastructure. Despite the differences in the socio-demographic and physical characteristics within and between these two communities, the list of variables that contributed to their sense of place was the same. Every interview would touch on all of the above topics without fail.

These two communities did differ, however, in their definitions of meanings of these place components. Although the list of place components was the same, conceptions and meanings of recreation, nature and community diverged between Hinton and Jasper. The type of recreation that was deemed appropriate and the landscapes that best supported a resident's most desired form of recreation differed markedly between Hinton and Jasper respondents. Generally, Hinton respondents preferred to use the industrial landscape that surrounded their townsite rather than the national park landscape, because they felt that the industrial landscape was as beautiful as the park and was also more peaceful, quiet and less restrictive. Jasper participants, however, preferred to use the national park for recreation and rarely indicated use outside of the park. Jasper respondents reasoned that there were so many beautiful 'places' within the park that there was no need to go outside of it for recreation. Moreover, they indicated that the visible presence of human impacts on the landscape around Hinton detracted from their experience there. Hinton and Jasper also differed in that Jasper respondents seemed to indicate more of a community spirit in their town, and Hinton respondents seemed to indicate that their town was more of a family town.

The type of landscape management that surrounded each community seemed to closely match the recreation type adopted by respondents, as well as the preferred landscape for recreating. Hinton respondents preferred to drive to secluded spots for campsite camping—often non-designated campsites—to enjoy the outdoors. In these spots they felt they were far removed from people, and they were free to recreate in anyway they chose, free of restrictions. These respondents indicated that in the park the restrictions, high fees, and large numbers of people all detracted from their wilderness experience. Jasper respondents indicated that they primarily hiked as recreation in the park and they could do this either from their backdoor, or by driving short distances and hiking from some parking area. Although Jasper participants acknowledged that the park could become extremely busy in the summer, all residents indicated avoidance strategies for escaping high use areas.

The mountains were significant to the sense of place of all respondents in this project, regardless of community. Mountains were important for: the security and presence and the recreational opportunities they provided; the protected wilderness they harboured; the status that was associated with living in a world-renowned location; and, the constant change that the mountains displayed and the perspective this provided. These categories fall into the three components that constitute most place theorists' definition of place: the experiential, the social and the physical elements of place. The recreational opportunities highlight the experiential component of place; harbouring protected wilderness and the status associated with living there constitute the social component; and, the security/presence and the changing quality of the mountains highlights the physical component of place. Responses indicated that personal experiences were often influenced by the social milieu that surrounded individuals, therefore tempering individual experience, values and beliefs with group experiences, values and beliefs. Likewise, larger level social constructions of place meaning and beliefs seemed to be filtered through—and so challenged by or supported by—individual level experiences.

Strengths and Limitations

The photo-assisted qualitative methodology employed for this project was integral in allowing for the richness of responses, insights, and detail that were collected. As the researcher and interviewer, I believe that the senses of place that were shared during the course of this research would not have been of as high quality without the visual exercise of representing 'place' through photographs. This visual exercise informed the semi-structured interviews that allowed the respondents and me to deliberate and converse over place issues. I do not believe that the interviews would have been as meaningful without the photographs nor the photographs as meaningful without the interviews.

The photographs have been used as a means for inspiring thought, improving response, and clarifying communication between respondents and me. I have not analyzed the visual data for this thesis, but have acknowledged their importance in contributing to the quality of the interview data, which are the data that results are drawn from. I contend that the analysis used for this project best matched the research questions and themes that I was pursuing from the outset. Namely, I was interested in how respondents would discuss and represent their sense of place, and how the physical and social components of place would contribute. The photo-assisted qualitative methodology utilized in this project, then, provided for the quality of responses that were received as well as the high levels of validity attained despite the difficulties in communication that can arise when discussing sense of place topics.

The qualitative nature of this research, however, limits me from generalizing beyond the respondents that I have worked with, whereas a quantitative survey methodology could have allowed me to speak with more confidence for all of the residents from Hinton and Jasper. This is a tradeoff that I was aware of from the outset, however, and I chose to explore a limited set of respondents' senses of place intensively instead of an extensive set of respondents more generally. There are certainly advantages and disadvantages to each approach, and perhaps the only way to account for these is to employ a mixed-methods approach that would inform the extensive quantitative component of research with themes and insights from the intensive qualitative component. While this mixed-methods approach would provide an informative and generalizable data set, this was not an option that I was able to choose due to time and financial constraints.

Future Areas for Research

The type of land management that surrounded these communities seemed to play a significant role in how respondents recreated, and how they perceived and evaluated landscapes. Attachments to certain landscape types seemed to translate into lower levels of satisfaction with different landscape types. What remains to be explained, however, is how this relationship functions. Possible areas of future research could focus on trying to gauge how land management systems and local residents interact. Does the relationship, or the exchange of information, function on a conscious level, with management systems relaying specific messages to the public that are then successfully deciphered and adhered to; or, is it a case of unintended consequences, where management actions are more significant in affecting residents' use patterns and preferences rather than any intentional message(s)? A potential study could compare land managers' public relations strategies with those management strategies not intended to affect public perceptions, to assess which matches more closely the public's use and perception of the surrounding landscapes.

While there has been a considerable amount of place research that has focused on how increased mobility affects sense of place, there has not been as much work that deals with how residents' senses of place are affected by external influences, and how this may vary between newer and long-time residents. There was strong indication from this project that the "outside" was important in how residents perceived of their place of residence. Future research should attempt to delve into how the outside affects the inside. This could explore not only how societal trends and structures affect sense of place, but also how other places that are meaningful to residents contribute to their quality of life in the place they reside. As individuals increasingly explore and experience new places other than their home, place researchers should strive to incorporate consideration of these into sense of place investigations. Likewise, time in place is another place component that has not received adequate attention. Time issues can also be explored in terms of these "other" places. Although one may experience an "other" place only once every few years—a relatively "insignificant" amount of time—that place can still provide profound meaning to whoever is experiencing it. Further, that "other" place may come to be an integral component of one's home by providing a vision of the ideal place with which to compare one's own place. Sense of place theory and research could benefit from the richer conceptions of place that would emerge from more research into such issues of time and the 'outside'. Further, as mentioned above, a mixed-methods approach may strengthen place research by allowing for intensive exploration of sense of place in a framework that tests findings across a more extensive sample of study populations.

Concluding Remarks

Place is much more than simply the social constructions that constitute it, or the experiences one has there, or the physical characteristics of that place; place is a complex interplay of all of these elements. The participants from this project continuously indicated the importance of a well-rounded existence in place, where the social, the experiential and the physical elements of place are all of high quality. Even for the respondents who had moved to these communities specifically for the type of environment available in Hinton and Jasper, place was not deemed satisfactory unless all three place components were satisfactory. Respondents who felt that their social place was lacking were likely to feel less overall satisfaction with place, and indicated a desire to leave.

The methodology that constitutes this research provided a means for the social, physical and experiential components of place to appear in the findings, and because of this some of the interplay between physical and social components of place have been explored. Instead of focusing on separate components of place this project has attempted, and been able, to investigate some of the interactions that constitute a sense of place. There remain many more interactions and relationships, however, that need further exploration. Sense of place research attempts to delve into hard to reach areas of human and place interaction, and as such, it will be the research that addresses the interaction of these elements that will provide the most informative insights. The ability of place to inspire emotion, longing and commitment in humans rests not in its parts but in its composite; it lies not in its separate components but in the inseparability of these components. It is here in the thick of things where the mysteries of sense of place still lurk.

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Appendix A

Interview Guide

Sense of place questions

How long have you lived in the area?

Why originally chose to live here?
Why have you stayed?
What do you do here?
- work
- recreation
- social networks

What do you consider your community to be?
How connected do you feel to this community?

What might cause you to leave / why would you be reluctant to leave?
What kind of quality of life do you have here?
- what might make it better? (What kind of changes to the landscape or your situation)
- ditto for 'worse'

What OTHER places might you have taken pictures of? Why? How are these places different?
Are some of these places substitutable for those you've taken pictures of or one of a kind? Why or why not?

What *kind* of a landscape is this–what does it mean to you?

What aspects of this place do you feel most connected to?
- probes - landscape
  - social

Are there specific places on the map that hold special meaning for you. Including your own land.

How much land do you own?
(If a woodlot or some acreage.)
How often do you get out on your own land?
Do you walk, hunt, play, hike, ski on your neighbours property?
Do you walk, hunt, play, hike, ski on Crown land in the area?

What is most important to you about this place?

Appendix B

Consent forms and Letter of Explanation

Dear research participant:

Thank you for your intrest in our study of place attachment. The aim of this research is to create a better understanding of the specific elements and factors that make people attached to the communities and landscapes in which they live. We are using an innovative research methodology to attempt to capture what is special and meaningful about local places according to the people that live there.

You are being invited to participate in this project, but your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any time or you may withdraw specific data that pertains to yourself without any penalty or any repurcussions. In order for you to participate, we need your signature at the end of this form.

Should you choose to participate, we will require about a 5 hour commitment of your time. We will be asking you to take a total of 24 photographs with cameras that we will provide. We are asking for two shots each of the twelve "things" that most attach you to the place where you live. We invite you to interpret the assignment broadly. There may be special places that you would like to photograph, or buildings, or people, or the places where you recreate. You may take photos of places where something special happened, or places that you simply like to visit or spend time. You may take photos that represent other things (e.g. a church to represent the congregation, or a marsh or field to represent a certain type of habitat). If you are taking pictures of friends and family, you will need to obtain their permission.

After we develop your film we will arrange a time to interview you about what you chose to photograph. At that time we will ask you to identify where the photos were taken on a map. Therefore, do not include any places that you might consider secret. We will develop two sets of your photographs. One is for you to keep. The other set will be scanned into a computer. Your interview will be recorded on a digital audio recorder. We plan to create an internet website that will contain many of the photographs and parts of your interviews. Bear in mind that this material will be widely available to public viewing. At the time of the interview, if there are specific pictures that you wish to remain confidential, we will identify those photographs respect your wishes regarding confidentiality for those items. We will send all research participants notification when the website is online. Through that website, interested persons will also be able to obtain written information (research reports, journal articles, etc.) regarding the project.

Through this research we hope to identify what is special and unique and meaningful about specific local places that we study, but we also hope to identify more general trends with respect to the balance between people's attachment to people versus places versus things.

Should you have any questions about the research procedures or your rights as a participant, call the principle investigator (Dr. Tom Beckley). Should you have any concerns about the nature of this research, please contact David MacLean, Dean of the Faculty of Forestry and Environmental Management, P.O. Box 44555 Fredericton, New Brunswick E3B 6C2 (506) 453-4885.

The principle investigator for this research is Dr. Tom Beckley, Faculty of Forestry and Environmental Management, University of New Brunswick. I may be reached by phone at (506) 453-4917 or by email at beckley@unb.ca or by conventional mail at the address on the letterhead. Dr. Rich Stedman of the Penn State University, and Sara Wallace, a student at UNB, are also involved in the research.

Your signature below implies that you have read and understood the material above and that you agree to participate in the study.

______________________________ ______________
Signature Date

Write out name, address and phone number below (this information will be kept in a secure file in Dr. Beckley's office and on Sara Wallace's computer and will only be available to the researchers listed above for the purposes of contacting you regarding this project):

____
name

____
address

____

____
phone

Attachment "B"

Informed Consent Form for Photo Subjects

I, ____________________ (write name), understand that the photos taken of me [my children] are part of a research project on attachment to place being undertaken at the University of New Brunswick. I also understand that the photograph and audio clips about the photograph may be made available on the world wide web as part of the final project deliverable. My signature below implies that I understand the nature of the project and give permission for data (photos and audio) about me [my children] to be used for this project.

______________________________ ______________________

signature date

Statement from the research team:

Thank you for your interest in our study of place attachment. The aim of this research is to create a better understanding of the specific elements and factors that make people attached to the communities and landscapes in which they live. We are using an innovative research methodology to attempt to capture what is special and meaningful about local places according to the people that live there. You are being invited to participate in this project, but your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You are free to have your photograph withheld from the final project. If you initially consent, but change your mind in the future, we can remove data on you from the website and our files without any penalty to you. Your signature implies your willingness to allow us to use your photo and text about it from our interview of the photographer for the time being. Should you have any questions about the research procedures or your rights as a participant, call the principle investigator (Dr. Tom Beckley). Should you have any concerns about the nature of this research, please contact David MacLean, Dean of the Faculty of Forestry and Environmental Management, P.O. Box 44555 Fredericton, New Brunswick E3B 6C2 (506) 453-4885.

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